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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
DOS PASSOS, DÖBLIN AND THE EXAMPLE OF ULYSSES: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE MODERNIST DILEMMA

by



MARGARET COOPER

A THESIS  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and  
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research,  
for acceptance, a thesis entitled Dos Passos, Döblin,  
and the Example of Ulysses: A Case Study of the  
Modernist Dilemma  
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of Doctor of Philosophy.



## ABSTRACT

The shadow of Ulysses stretches over much of the twentieth-century Western novel. When perceived by certain readers, it has sometimes obscured and even distorted the view of works traditionally linked with Joyce's achievement. This has been true for two novels closely resembling Ulysses and each other ever since their respective 1925 and 1929 appearances, namely, John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer and Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz. Four decades of criticism show that Ulyssean associations have colored assessments of the American and German books, occasionally to the detriment of accuracy about their texts and usually to the neglect of their decidedly non-Joycean character. Both works certainly constitute responses to Ulysses. Nevertheless, Joyce's catalytic example was seconded by numerous others and was clearly interpreted by the two writers according to their own priorities.

Novels which have frequently been considered imitative and derivative are actually inseparable from their authors' heterogeneous literary production and non-literary activities. They receive their impetus from a confluence of interartistic sources and have legitimate ancestries in their creator's earlier efforts. Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz are also engendered by artistic orientations antithetical to the isolated aestheticism responsible for Ulysses and the stance Joyce adopted vis-à-vis society and current events.





Representing special attempts at ideological and artistic adjustment to the new realities of urban, technological, postwar, and postrevolutionary experience, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz seek progressive and popular reconciliations between art and mass life. Yet novels undeniably marked by incomplete conceptions and ambiguities mirror the common condition and contradictions of bourgeois art during this century's early decades. Here they display their most striking affinities with Ulysses as complementary revelations of Modernism.

A particular cultural, historical, and class phenomenon, Modernism comprehends both the self-conscious creation of artistic form appropriate to the expression of perceptibly changed subject matter and a non-integrating apprehension of reality. Symptomatic of the larger social fragmentation and attendant crisis in collective and individual consciousness, Modernism's most telling effects are noted in the disjuncture it poses between man and milieu and between artist and society. While hardly its exclusive translations, Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz typify major aspects of the general condition in prose fiction. Evidence of the dual problem of form and outlook residing at the core of Modernism is apparent in their texts.

Outgrowths of dissatisfactions with prevailing literary tendencies, these innovative experiments project reactions to contemporary history as incomplete accommodations and outright disengagement. Their interpretations of the physiognomy of the age outline only general, ahistorical patterns for mass existence lacking apparent coherence. A synthetic drive toward new expansiveness and





expressiveness endows each work with a protean aspect. It obliterates traditional generic contours and effaces the outlines of experience and characters alike. Whether allied with a Mallarmé-like movement toward autonomous art or with unsuccessful Apollinairean reconciliations of artistic priorities and social necessity, Modernism's interpretive consequences are keenly felt in the kindred ambiguities and paradoxes present in all three novels. Ultimately, responses to Ulysses which were conceived as its alternatives provide equally problematic solutions to the Modernist dilemma.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to pertinent editions of the work of Alfred Döblin, John Dos Passos, and James Joyce will be to those listed below. Following their first appearance, such references will usually be incorporated in the text in abbreviated form.

### Works of Alfred Döblin

- AzL     Aufsätze zur Literature. Ed. Walter Muschg. Olten: Walter, 1963.
- B        Briefe. Ed. Heinz Graber. Olten: Walter, 1970.
- BA       Berlin Alexanderplatz. Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf. Ed. Walter Muschg. Olten: Walter, 1964.
- DL       Die deutsche Literatur (im Ausland seit 1933). Ein Dialog zwischen Politik und Kunst. Paris: Science et Littérature, 1938.
- DM       Der deutsche Maskenball von Linke Poot. Wissen und Verändern. Ed. Heinz Graber. Olten: Walter, 1972.
- E        Die Ehe. Drei Szenen und ein Vorspiel. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1931.
- ER       "Erster Rückblick." In Alfred Döblin. Im Buch--Zu Haus--Auf der Strasse, by Alfred Döblin and Oskar Loerke. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1928. Pp. 9-109.
- IN       Das Ich über der Natur. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1927.
- LM       Das verwerfliche Schwein. Novelle. Lydia und Mäxchen. Tiefe Verbeugung in einem Akt. Lusitania. Drei Szenen. In Die Gefährten, 3. Vienna: Genossenschaftsverlag, 1920.
- S        Schriften zur Politik und Gesellschaft. Ed. Heinz Graber. Olten: Walter, 1972.
- UD       Unser Dasein. Ed. Walter Muschg. Olten: Walter, 1964.



- VG     Die Vertreibung der Gespenster. Autobiographische Schriften. Betrachtungen zur Zeit. Aufsätze zu Kunst und Literatur. Ed. Manfred Beyer. Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1968.
- WV     Wissen und Verändern! Offene Briefe an einen jungen Menschen. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1931.
- Z     Die Zeitlupe. Kleine Prosa. Ed. Walter Muschg. Olten: Walter, 1962.

#### Works of John Dos Passos

- BT     The Best Times. An Informal Memoir. Toronto: New American Library of Canada, 1968.
- 14C     The Fourteenth Chronicle. Letters and Diaries of John Dos Passos. Ed. Townsend Ludington. Boston: Gambit, 1973.
- GM     The Garbage Man. A Parade with Shouting. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926.
- MT     Manhattan Transfer. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953.
- OMI     One Man's Initiation: 1917. Authorized ed., complete and unexpurgated. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969.
- PC     A Pushcart at the Curb. New York: George H. Doran, 1922.
- RRA     Rosinante to the Road Again. New York: George H. Doran, 1922.
- 3P     Three Plays. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1934.
- 3S     Three Soldiers. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1921.

#### Works of James Joyce

- CW     The Critical Writings. Ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. 4th ed. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- L1     Letters. Ed. Stuart Gilbert. London: Faber and Faber, 1957.
- L2     Letters of James Joyce. 2 vols. Ed. Richard Ellmann. London:  
L3     Faber and Faber, 1966.





- P      A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. 7th ed. New York:  
Viking Press, 1966.
- U      Ulysses. 1961; rpt. New York: Vintage Books/Random House,  
1966.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As is true of all generic geneologies, the history of the novel is, in one sense, a history of literary relationships described by aesthetic interactions: those of distinct works with other works and of particular writers with the efforts of others. Since the eighteenth century, the Western novel has experienced a relatively concentrated development revealing the proliferation of such affiliations. They are frequently international, sometimes the result of literary indebtedness, and often involve unique responses to and interpretations of one writer's work by and through that of another. In this way the history of literary relationships assumes the particular genealogical dimensions attributed to it by Virginia Woolf in her observation that "Books descend from books as families descend from families."<sup>1</sup>

Within the novel's lineage assorted combinations arise: Don Quixote and Tom Jones, Pamela and Joseph Andrews, Tristram Shandy and Jacques le fataliste, Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre and Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Les Faux-monnayeurs and Point Counter Point, Scott and I promessi sposi, Cooper and Les Chouans, Dostoevsky and Invisible Man, Faulkner and Cien años de soledad, Dickens and Dostoevsky, Scott and Balzac, Balzac and Galdós, et cetera. Among twentieth-century kinships James Joyce enjoys the greatest number of appearances in



conjunction with novels originating within a twenty-year period following Ulysses' publication in 1922. The range of associations is broad. It encompasses the efforts of celebrities and lesser luminaries alike. The spectrum includes, for example, novels by Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Thomas Mann, Thomas Wolfe, Hans Henny Jahnn, Hermann Broch, Conrad Aiken, and Malcolm Lowry.

Despite occasional evidence to the contrary, a specific Joyce-connection for the modern novel is largely confined to its English and German-language forms within the aforementioned time span. It can, of course, be argued that the reactions elicited in turn by these Ulyssean responses, like Faulkner's traces in the Spanish-American novel's recent flowering, have some link with Joyce. It is with a Joyce, however, who is "spread, diluted through other writers."<sup>2</sup> Undeniably, the shadow of Joyce, more specifically of Ulysses, stretches over much of what we have come to regard as peculiar to the twentieth-century novel. Yet it is none the less true that this shadow, especially as perceived by some of Joyce's more devoted partisans, has tended to obscure and sometimes even distort the view of novels traditionally linked with his achievement.

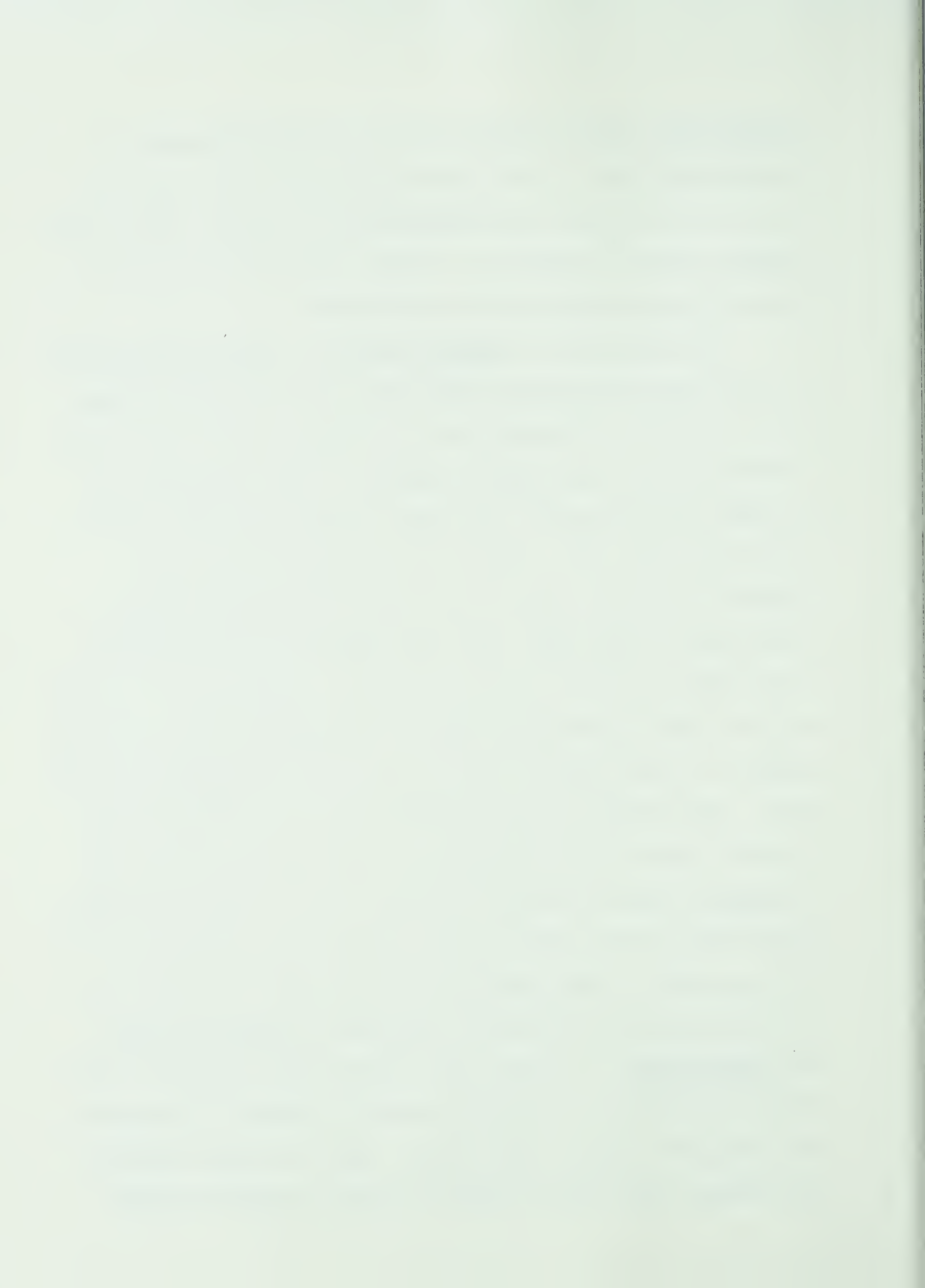
This phenomenon is apparent in the ties established with Ulysses by two works closely resembling it and each other ever since their respective publications in 1925 and 1929: John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer and Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz. In very distinct ways the two books constitute responses to Ulysses, which profoundly impressed both Dos Passos and Döblin. Radical departures from their author's earlier novels, Manhattan Transfer and Berlin





Alexanderplatz represent turning points in artistic development for Dos Passos and Döblin. At the same time, they are logical extensions of the kinds of efforts which distinguish the two writers' heterogeneous literary production--imaginative, critical, and journalistic--previous to and coincident with the 1925 and 1929 novels.

The significance of Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz is readily appreciated through familiarity with their authors' oeuvre, with the traditions from which the novels emerge, and with the literary conditions to which they address themselves. Their consequences for the genre can be detected in the German and Spanish-American evidence of the past twenty years. Even so, the testimony of nearly four decades of criticism reveals the persistence of problematic Joycean associations in both novels. They have colored critical assessments of Dos Passos' and Döblin's work, sometimes to the detriment of accuracy about the texts themselves and usually to the neglect of the non-Joycean character of their authors' artistic rationale and sought-after artistic goals. Almost always, the Joyce affiliations have contributed toward a limited focus on the relationship the novels bear to each other and to Ulysses, thereby restricting the view of their more profound general rapprochement and the important manner in which they specifically differ from one another. Aiming toward this end and toward the exposure of the traditionally neglected shared backgrounds of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz, the present study explores their interrelationships within the context of the Modernist condition symptomatic of bourgeois art during this century's early decades. While the inquiry confronts the evidence of the texts in question, it does so with the necessary



recognition that art is actively informed by an attitude toward the world outside the work. Moreover, in its understanding that art forms cannot be considered in isolation from their total environment, it perceives literature as not merely the aesthetic reflection of historical reality and social totality but a material element of both. In this way it attempts to achieve a balanced evaluation of an artistic development that has often provoked as much scholarly partisanship as it has hostility.

Since the present investigation emerges as an outgrowth of previous scholarship, it acknowledges the traditional associations surrounding Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz and establishes its own terms of reference for exploring the common ground shared by the works (Chapter II). From this critical context the inquiry proceeds to expose important pre-Manhattan Transfer, pre-Alexanderplatz parallels in the writing of Dos Passos and Döblin. With a view toward the genesis of Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz, it focuses on the correspondences and similarities in their authors' attempted ideological and artistic accommodations to the new realities of urban, technological, postwar, and postrevolutionary experience (Chapter III). Considering the catalytic example of Joyce's work as an important corroboration of specific artistic aims for both Dos Passos and Döblin, the study approaches Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Berlin Alexanderplatz as related efforts to create artistic forms appropriate to the expression of perceptibly changed subject matter and as reflections of a fragmented apprehension of objective reality (Chapter IV). Examination of the textual evidence in the novels reveals



that although engendered by an artistic rationale diametrically opposed to the one responsible for Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz provide equally problematic solutions to the Modernist dilemma.



## CHAPTER II

### A PROBLEM OF ASSOCIATIONS

#### The Reception of Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz

In a 1928 review marking Ulysses' appearance in German translation, Alfred Döblin observed that Joyce's book was one with which every serious writer had to concern himself. It attempted in its way to answer the question: how can one write today?<sup>1</sup> Over four decades later, John Dos Passos recalled his 1922 encounter with Joyce's work and concluded: "If Ulysses didn't accomplish anything else--for me at least--it disposed of the current theory that the English novel was dead."<sup>2</sup> The special importance attached to Ulysses by both the German and the American reflects the international appeal the work held for self-conscious writers, artists, and the occasional film-maker whose testimonials to Joyce's skill and innovation frequently revealed much about their own aims and aspirations. For the two writers cited, expressions of tribute are particularly significant. They shed light on the relationship their own work shares with Joyce's Ulysses. With the publication of Manhattan Transfer in 1925 and Berlin Alexanderplatz in 1929, Dos Passos and Döblin revealed their own attempts to answer the question "How can one write today?" and to disprove the current theory of the novel's demise.





Anticipated by their creators' earlier efforts, the two novels were nevertheless their most radical attempts in the genre so far. Moreover, if they departed markedly from Dos Passos' and Döblin's previous work, they were even more pronounced breakthroughs in the national traditions from which they emerged. The combination and exploitation of such features as simultaneity, montage, leitmotif, symbolic parallels, discontinuity, interior monologue, and the increasingly dramatic presentations of the urban metropolis through its multiple voices were virtually unknown in the German novel. An identical claim can be made for the somewhat younger transatlantic form. Yet the very qualities which marked Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz as distinctly un-American and un-German were precisely those which conferred an international stamp upon them. From the outset a number of their readers were struck by the strong resemblance the novels bore to Joyce's Ulysses. Once initiated, the Ulysses link for Dos Passos' fourth and Döblin's sixth novel has been maintained on a fairly regular basis. As is only too apparent from a survey of its history, the affiliation has not always been beneficial for either work. This history demonstrates as well the complex interplay of factors affecting reception and reputation and their shaping and coloring of critical judgment.

By no means the dominant theme of the varied notices Manhattan Transfer received following publication, the Ulyssean affinities of Dos Passos' new novel were still sufficiently obvious to champions and detractors alike. Partial or total indebtedness for general inspiration and method was unequivocally asserted. There was some



disagreement, however, regarding the work's qualitative relationship to its source and even to the desirability of such a source. Whether they explicitly stated or merely implied it, these reviews reflected as much a reaction to Ulysses as to Manhattan Transfer.

The most favorable assessment conceded a certain indebtedness on the part of Dos Passos to "Joyce et Cie" but submitted that Manhattan Transfer, quite possibly "the foundation of a whole new school of novel-writing," was vastly superior in terms of interest and "breathless reality" to "the laboratory reports" of "the great white boar, Mr. Joyce's Ulysses." Sinclair Lewis' enthusiasm for Manhattan Transfer, as expressed in both his abridged Saturday Review of Literature piece and its expanded essay version, remains unmatched among American critics. It was unique among those who perceived some Irish parentage for the work. A slighter but still laudatory appraisal in the New Yorker, which found the work both an improvement over the earlier Three Soldiers (1921) and an accurate portrayal of the city, deemed the influence from Joyce "marked, but beneficent." Opinions from New York Times commentators differed noticeably. In his attempt to convey New York through fiction, Dos Passos had, according to Henry Longan Stuart, created "a powerful and sustained piece of work." To do so, he had elected the method initiated when "Mr. Joyce cast his monkeywrench into the mechanics of the novel." What Stuart interpreted as the work's weakness, its lack of discrimination which prohibited a much needed "tempering optimism," was a methodological flaw which Dos Passos shared "with practically all the impressionists and 'super-naturalists,' American, English and foreign alike." By incorporating "the rhythms of the vortex



into the very stuff and substance of form and matter," the work became "a mere instrument for registering impressions." Stuart's preference for the more traditional realistic route, complete with "plot and psychological apparatus," was not shared by another Times Reviewer, Lloyd Morris. In his survey of six months' fiction Morris provided a cursory dismissal of Manhattan Transfer: "John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer, an attempt to achieve an expressionistic picture of New York, is courageous but not impressive. Doubtless some novelist will eventually achieve an expression of New York equivalent to Joyce's expression of Dublin in Ulysses; Mr. Dos Passos has attempted this, but he has failed."<sup>3</sup>

The severest criticism came as a reprimand from H. L. Mencken. Although a sponsor for the publication of new American and European writing and a promoter of Dreiser, Norris, Ibsen, Hauptmann, and Joyce, Mencken was to prove increasingly unreceptive to literary experimentation and innovation. To some extent his evaluation of Manhattan Transfer anticipates the shift toward extreme literary conservatism. Acknowledging Dos Passos' new work as an attempt "to escape from the conventional bounds of the novel" which presumably stemmed from Ulysses, Mencken displayed little sympathy for the effort. Instead he was "in grave doubt that any human being will ever be able to read it--that is, honestly, thoroughly from end to end. It is incoherent, and not infrequently very dull. It staggers all over the lot. Mr. Dos Passos, indeed, has yet to prove that the promise of Three Soldiers had any substance in it. His first book was far too successful: a very unfortunate thing for a young novelist. His later volumes have shown





him hard at it, but making extremely heavy weather."<sup>4</sup>

Such early reactions to Manhattan Transfer have analogues in responses to the publication of Berlin Alexanderplatz. In spite of the appearance of its author's writing since 1917 and the fact that Dos Passos already had essays, poetry, travel accounts and three novels to his credit, Manhattan Transfer was essentially the work of a newcomer to what he later termed "la vie littéraire" (BT, pp. 149-179). In contrast, Berlin Alexanderplatz was, if not the work of a publicly successful writer-neurologist, certainly the work of one who had already acquired a significant reputation as literary innovator among like-minded writers, artists, musicians, and critics for his stories, novels, and satirical glosses. Moreover, readers of such widely circulating publications as the Berliner Tageblatt, Vossische Zeitung, Prager Tagblatt, Frankfurter Zeitung, and Leipziger Tageblatt were well-acquainted with his frequently barbed Berlin vignettes and irreverent theatre reviews. Apprehension of Alexanderplatz as the product of an Irish inspiration was therefore to have further-reaching repercussions than for Manhattan Transfer.

Noting its metropolitan aspect and formal idiosyncracies, German and Swiss reviewers of Berlin Alexanderplatz perceived the novel's kinship with Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer, both of which had appeared in German translation two years earlier (respectively, October 14 and 17, 1927). Whereas the American novel was considered a possible source and surely an analogous experiment, it was Ulysses which assumed the role of the German work's immediate ancestor. A number of reviewers, to be sure, were content to remark on technical and stylistic



similarities and to happily rank Döblin's effort as a German counterpart for the great narrative experiments undertaken elsewhere. Others, however, offered brief comparisons of Döblin's latest work which were sometimes accompanied by intimations or outright assertions of influence. Early commentary of this type ranges from the general reference to the formal influence of recent American fiction to the specifically expressed preference for Döblin's rendering of Joycean thought montage. Among those well-disposed toward Alexanderplatz, Walter Muschg, who was later to repudiate his original claim, declared that Döblin's newest novel had obviously been inspired by Ulysses.<sup>5</sup>

For some observers Döblin's novel failed to arouse enthusiasm. As was the case with Manhattan Transfer, its weaknesses were sometimes attributed to an either ill-advised or inferior imitation of Joyce. Hans Henny Jahnn, whose own Perrudja (1929) had received Döblin's praise, recalled in the December issue of Der Kreis that one or two years earlier Döblin had strongly urged the reading of Ulysses. Now to the detriment of the excellent style which distinguished Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun (1915), Döblin had appropriated many of Joyce's practices. As a result he succeeded in creating a "spherical bubble" of the subconscious, automatism, and inertia. He also failed to depict either the Alexanderplatz or Berlin.<sup>6</sup>

The most negative response to the novel emerged as part of the campaign initiated in December 1929 by the official organ of the Proletarian Revolutionary Writer's Union. A first review by Klaus Neukrantz interpreted the novel as a demonstration of the bourgeois left's hostility toward the organized class struggle of the proletariat.



Often sensitive to adverse criticism attacking him instead of his work, Döblin retaliated with a harsh critique of Die Linkskurve itself. He polemicized most heavily against the program articulated by Johannes Becher. The latter's January 1930 Linkskurve editorial dealing with the duties of the Union had drawn on the example of Alexanderplatz as completely unrealistic in its presentation of the transport worker Biberkopf and as a signal that bourgeois literature was at its end. By the next year the battle between Döblin and Die Linkskurve had increased in virulence and scope. Neukrantz's earlier charges against the artificiality of milieu and protagonist were now coupled with Otto Biha's accusations that Döblin consciously worked on behalf of the bourgeoisie and that his novel was, in reality, "das Bekenntnis eines Kulturnihilisten, eines schwankenden, haltlosen, resignierten Bürgers, der endlich für seine innere Zerrissenheit die äussere Form (seinen Stil) gefunden hat. Nicht etwa in den Tiefen seiner dichterischen Seele--sondern bei dem Iren James Joyce, der das alles in seinem Ulysses besser vormacht."<sup>7</sup>

In opposition to the diverse interpretations of influence and imitation, some Döblin supporters advanced an alternate view. Generally speaking, it either implicitly or explicitly claimed his novel's originality and advocated its evaluation on the basis of its own strengths and weaknesses rather than in terms of kinship. Certainly there was much to recommend in this kind of judgment, particularly as the starting point for any critical evaluation. Its adherents, however, did not always demonstrate objectivity or accuracy in the manner in which they chose to deal with the problem of apparent affinities. On occasion





attempts were made to diminish striking similarities between Alexanderplatz and Ulysses, or those between Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer, by relegating them to the appearance of a few shared devices like simultaneous representation or the leitmotiflike use of quotations. Elsewhere emphasis was placed upon marked points of divergence. Some of these were only partially pertinent to the topic under discussion. Other contrasts pointed out by Döblin's zealous defenders were not always precise. Walter Benjamin, for example, averred that what uniquely distinguished Alexanderplatz was its stylistic principle of montage. He failed to see that the same argument could be made for Ulysses.<sup>8</sup> Such efforts notwithstanding, the novel's affiliation with Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer, particularly conceived as indebtedness to Joyce, gained enough currency in the years immediately following publication. It circulated even among discussions in which Dos Passos and Manhattan Transfer were the principal subjects.<sup>9</sup>

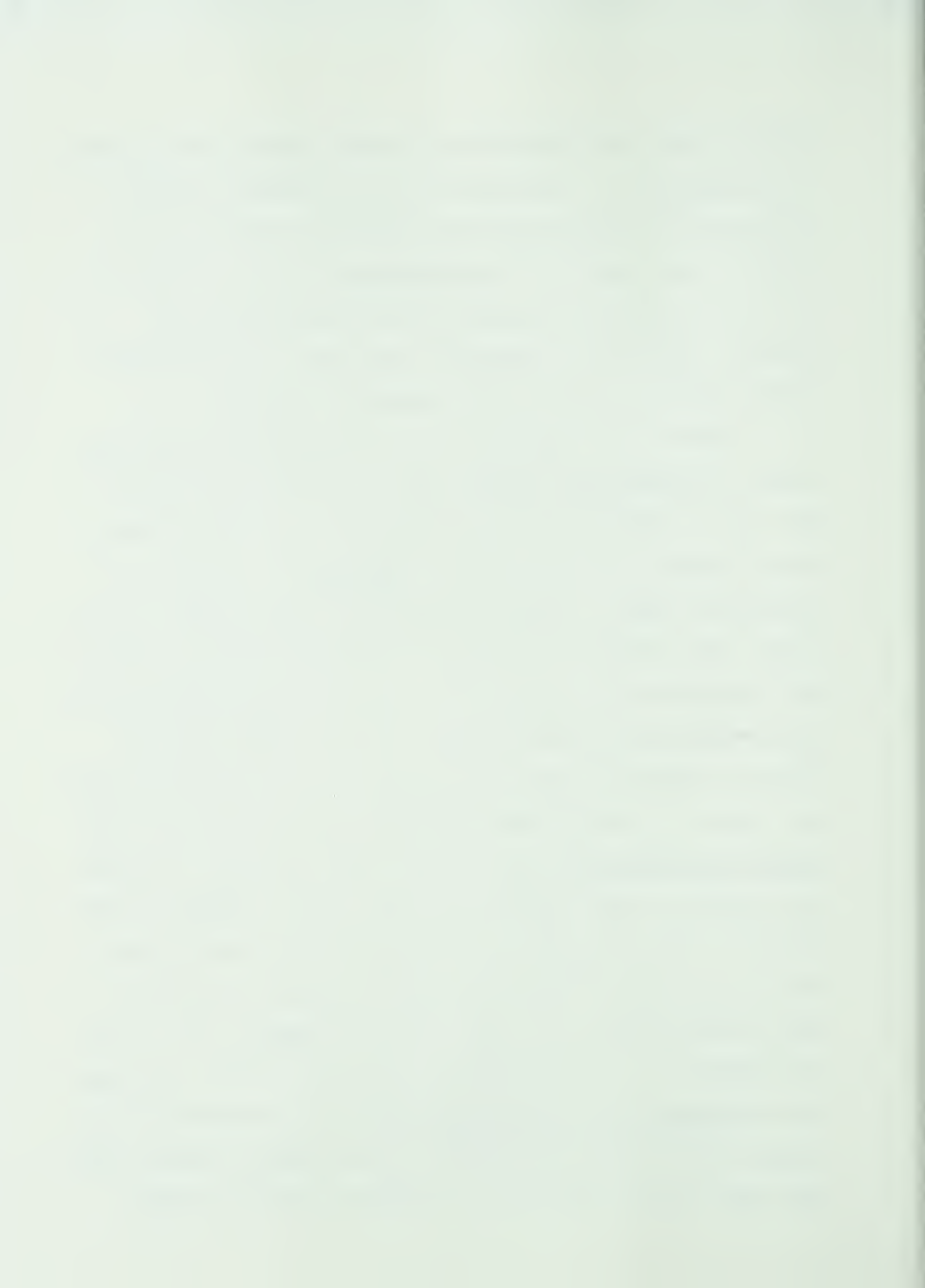
By and large the observations of Döblin's compatriots and those of foreign critics familiar with German literature and language displayed more variety than did appraisals written in the idiom of Döblin's alleged models. Admittedly, many of the problems encountered in the work's British and American notices derive from lack of literary and cultural exposure. To audiences across the Channel or the Atlantic, Döblin, like many of his compatriots, was virtually unknown. His untranslated stories and the novels Wallenstein (1920) and Berge Meere und Giganten (1924) received limited attention in Britain and the United States where such major organs as the Times Literary Supplement and the New York Herald Tribune provided no more than brief recognition. In





addition, while interesting indices of foreign reception, these reviews offered impressionistic readings of the texts and applied evaluative criteria such as characterization and exposition of motive to novels founded on their rejection.<sup>10</sup> Alexanderplatz, the first of Döblin's works to be translated into English, received considerably more attention. Moreover, once exported in this form, it was increasingly reduced to imitation and its author relegated to disciple.

Not the least significant factor in reestablishing a particular climate for Alexanderplatz, Berlin (1931) on Anglophone soil was the fact that its translation "into the American" was executed by Eugene Jolas, intimate of Joyce and editor of transition.<sup>11</sup> Assuming a task sufficiently complex to challenge the most gifted and diligent of translators, Jolas confronted the problem of an audience generally unfamiliar with the German novel's milieu, its cultural and literary allusions, its style parodies, and the very pronounced regional, class, and ethnic dialects it employed. Some of these problems had been recognized abroad with respect to a future French translation by Félix Bertaux in a 1930 Nouvelle Revue Française survey of recent German literature. No doubt they account, at least partially, for Robert Minder's judgment of Zoga Motchané's 1931 French version as "wretched."<sup>12</sup> Such considerations seem to have attracted little notice from the American translation's early reviewers except in two cases. While the Nation's critic viewed the translation as an interpretation of the German original, the reader for the Saturday Review of Literature spoke of an approximation of the original and the difficulties inherent in the "ephemeral American slang" into which "a novel crowded with the peculiar nuances of a certain



milieu in a certain European capital" had been rendered. When satisfaction with the quality of the translation was expressed, as was common to a number of American and British notices, it was not always made clear if this satisfaction had anything to do with a knowledge of the original text.<sup>13</sup> For the most part these reviewers responded to the work either in terms of its stylistic character or its subject matter. Depending on their emphasis, they submitted radically divergent opinions, some of these tempered by the advertisements for the work.

Initially the publicity for Alexanderplatz, Berlin could not have failed to create certain anticipations among its readers. Once established, the connections between Döblin's novel with those of Joyce and Dos Passos proved difficult for German readers to ignore. For English-language audiences it was not necessary to wait for the notices; advance publicity called attention to the associations. The Viking Press Spring Catalogue, for example, announced: "The publishers offer this novel as an event of the greatest importance in literary history. For Alexanderplatz, Berlin is the German Ulysses, and already it has aroused repercussions similar to those which greeted Joyce's famous book. But it is Ulysses with a difference--for Doeblin's story is lucid, well-constructed, and irresistible in its forward march. Doeblin has adapted Joyce's method to his own particular purposes, and achieved an original and stirring work of art."<sup>14</sup>

Such an advertising campaign inevitably aroused certain expectations which, after a reading of the "German Ulysses," were inevitably deflated for some readers. Admittedly, a number of critics merely remarked on the novel's modern or avant-garde aspect, its cine-





matic features, its resemblance to Dadaist collage, et cetera.

Depending on whether these were seen as dominant traits or merely the means for offering a particular view of society, estimations of the novel differed noticeably. When the observer's orientation was pre-eminently formalistic, Alexanderplatz, Berlin was greeted far less favorably than when the critical focus included more than technique. In England the translated novel was hailed in one quarter for its depiction of a postwar lower class milieu and damned in another for its wallowing in the cesspool. Furthermore, in contrast with an enthusiastic Times Literary Supplement response to the German original, Alexanderplatz in translation was dismissed by another Times reviewer as a technical experiment lacking in originality and cohesion. Across the ocean this social and aesthetic polarization became more pronounced, as did the problematic association with Ulysses. In addition, although British reviews saw the book as inviting structural comparison with Ulysses--a comparison which found Alexanderplatz lacking the organization and unity of Joyce's work--and in one instance designated Döblin as a German James Joyce, the troublesome link with Ulysses was not their major concern. Indeed, Sadleir of the New Statesman even went so far as to express preference for Döblin's "Finer textured, more resilient and not so harshly insolent technique."<sup>15</sup> By comparison the Americans gave far greater emphasis to the relationship.

Acknowledging that German critics had perceived similarities between Alexanderplatz and Ulysses, the New York Times Book Review critic Percy Hutchinson adopted a more extreme stance for himself. His discussion was fully entitled "A German Experiment in Fiction: Alfred



Döblin's Novel, Alexanderplatz, undertakes a modification of the Joycean method in Ulysses." It recognized the work as "an audacious adventure; not uninteresting, moderately moving; frequently dramatic, but just as frequently blurred; and, on the whole, weakened rather than strengthened by the multiplicity of devices employed in the expectation of increasing the effect." Its flaws were apparent in the running authorial comments, the explanatory notes, and the use of what the reviewer mistakenly construed as imaginary headlines and news fragments. The source of such weaknesses was ascribed to their author's striving for effect, one of the inevitable pitfalls "besetting a writer of the Joyce school." The New York Herald Tribune reviewer Florence Britten acknowledged the publicity which had hailed Alexanderplatz as the German counterpart for Ulysses but found Döblin "infinitely more exhausting" and far less comprehensible than Joyce. She attributed this to the fact that Alexanderplatz, unlike Ulysses, was marred by its lack of a consistent point of view.<sup>16</sup>

More favorable opinions came from the New Republic, the Nation, and Forum in reviews prefaced by the titles "Berlin Underworld," "Slums of Berlin," and "German Labyrinth." The first, written by Karl Geiser, revealed some familiarity with both Döblin and contemporary German writing. In the second, Dos Passos' New Masses colleague Nathan Asch went so far as to ridicule the association with Joyce, at least insofar as the jacket blurb referred to the novel's Joycean technique. Joyce had no monopoly, he asserted, on what could be equally credited to Sterne or Rabelais. For the reader from the Chicago Daily Tribune, Alexanderplatz was not only remarkable and unforgettable but, like





Ulysses, required "almost a life's work to read!"<sup>17</sup> Such assessments proved the exception, however. The more popular view of Berlin Alexanderplatz within a Ulyssean context prevailed. It emerged as well within British and American scholarship of the period where Alexanderplatz became at best an example of "the original and interesting use . . . of suggestions taken from Joyce" and at worst "a thorough-going imitation of . . . James Joyce's Ulysses."<sup>18</sup>

Compared with this situation, those American appraisals of Manhattan Transfer as Joyce-derived appear decidedly less troublesome. Indeed, Joycean affiliations were to prove much less problematic for Dos Passos. To some extent the subsequent direction of the two writers' respective careers has a bearing here. For Dos Passos the decade following the publication of Manhattan Transfer was an extremely productive one. It found him working with the New Playwrights Theatre and the New Masses, translating the poetry of Blaise Cendrars, seeking justice for Sacco and Vanzetti and the Harlan County miners, and visiting Mexico and the Soviet Union. Most important, the period yielded U.S.A. which quickly overshadowed Manhattan Transfer. Dos Passos' major achievement, the trilogy first engaged the attention of reviewers during its 1932-36 appearance in separate volumes. It continued to hold the interest of its readers when published in its entirety in 1938. If traces of Ulysses and Joyce were detected in the work's technical features, the total accomplishment was nevertheless reckoned as distinctly Dos Passos. With U.S.A. the American writer gained international status which often gave him more prominence than Joyce.



Unlike that of Dos Passos, Döblin's career suffered a reversal and entered a period of decline. The years 1930-32 saw the production of a theatrical companion piece to the 1929 novel in the problem-ridden didactic play Die Ehe, the controversial political treatise Wissen und Verändern!, the revised version of the utopian novel Berge Meere und Giganten, and the major philosophical work Unser Dasein. Such activity was abruptly curtailed, however, by the increasingly dangerous situation within Germany. Döblin, the author of what would soon be called "degenerate" literature, a leftist, and nominally a Jew, left Berlin at the urging of friends the day after the burning of the Reichstag. A twelve-year exile spent in Switzerland, Paris, and Hollywood was accompanied by severe familial, financial, and emotional hardships. Although Döblin continued writing throughout the period, much of the work gives qualitative and quantitative evidence of the difficulties imposed by the necessary uprooting. In addition, for many people Döblin remained exclusively the author of Alexanderplatz, his only popular success and that work to which, as he later observed in his "Epilog," the public had nailed him fast. The identification of Döblin with this one work, that particular condition Günter Grass was eventually to describe as a deplorable Versimplung eines Schriftstellers,<sup>19</sup> persisted until Döblin's death in 1957. Thus, for him the controversial association with Joyce was never satisfactorily resolved within his lifetime.

Dos Passos' experience was quite different. His Joycean affiliations sparked little debate and provoked no refutation from the American writer. He may have regretted the fact that his post-U.S.A.



work was neither as seriously nor as well-received as his earlier novels; during his lifetime, however, he witnessed the importance attached to his writing and some renewal of interest in it by younger critics within his own country. We can speculate that since his international reputation far exceeded that of any simplistic reduction to disciple, admissions of influence on his part were nowhere near as difficult as they were for Döblin. Dos Passos, in fact, did not deny the likelihood of Joyce's influence upon his own writing. In this respect, he ranked it more significant than any from Stein.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, when specifically questioned about its connection with his first trilogy's narrative technique by Melvin Landsberg, Dos Passos conceded the existence of this kind of link among others, albeit with the proviso that "everybody is influenced by everything he reads, sees, hears [sic] etc." Similar acknowledgements to Landsberg regarding the myriad "sources" for the New York novel do not mention Joyce. His name, nevertheless, appears among those whom Dos Passos retrospectively claimed to have derived certain insights for the kind of innovative, panoramic novels which engaged him from the 1922 Three Soldiers onwards.<sup>21</sup>

For Döblin such a concession, even a qualified one, was out of the question. The early recognition of his novel as the product of influence or imitation, proved more and more difficult. As he explained his dissatisfaction almost twenty years after his work's publication, Döblin considered this interpretation to be an excessive concern with surface details, none of which had anything to do with his novel's essential nature (AzL, p. 391). With the increase in allegations of indebtedness to Joyce that accompanied the novel's English translation,





Döblin began responding with declarations of his independence. In time these were to become longer and more vehement.

Initially his assertions were fairly mild. An interview which appeared in the 1930-31 issue of the Czech publication Rozpravy Aventina found Döblin admitting to both a liking for Ulysses and a certain pride in the alleged connection others established between it and Alexanderplatz, particularly with respect to their comprehensiveness. He was still careful to point out that the claim of influence was one most likely to be made by those unfamiliar with his total production and the course of its development. As far as any technical similarities were concerned, he allowed that Alexanderplatz, like Ulysses, relied upon the use of montage and symbols. In contrast to Ulysses, however, his own novel involved the narration of a strong story. Less than two years later the 1932 epilogue originally prepared for that year's issue of Der Lesezirkel provided what was to become a much quoted explanation for apparent similarities. Döblin claimed unfamiliarity with Joyce's work during the writing of the first quarter of his own novel. The subsequent reading of Ulysses delighted him and proved to be "a good wind in his sails." He accounted for any resemblances between the two works with the observation that "Dieselbe Zeit kann unabhängig voneinander Ähnliches, ja Gleiches an verschiedenen Stellen erzeugen. Das ist nicht weiter schwer verständlich." An unpublished typescript for the same lecture expressed the subject somewhat differently. Here Döblin admitted his inability to analyze Joyce's influence on Alexanderplatz but maintained that the Irish pioneer of style and narrative technique had no significance for essential parts of his own





book.<sup>22</sup>

By 1948 the autobiographical "Epilog" prepared for an edition of selections from his work devoted more space to the problem. In it Döblin countered the charges of influence by suggesting that if he had wanted to draw upon a predecessor, he would not have gone to the Irish writer as his source. Döblin's acquaintance with the method and style developed by Joyce was based upon his own familiarity with the source he and Joyce commonly shared in Expressionism and Dada (AzL, p. 391). A Nachwort for the 1955 reprint of the novel contained a shorter but stronger claim of originality with respect to its language and substance. Relating Alexanderplatz to the verse epic which had immediately preceded it, Döblin described his novel as "Manas auf berlinisch." He further exclaimed, "Was hat man später als Vorbild oder Anregung konstruiert! Ich soll den irischen Joyce imitiert haben. Ich habe nicht nötig, irgend jemanden zu imitieren. Die lebende Sprache, die mich umgibt, ist mir genug, und meine Vergangenheit liefert mir alles erdenkliche Material" (BA, p. 508).

That this practice of linking his own work with Joyce's continued to be of particular concern to him is additionally demonstrated by two letters, both of which justifiably urged a recognition of his unique development and his earlier literary technique. In his 1931 comments about work sent him from Professor Julius Petersen's seminar, Döblin observed, "Bei der Gegenüberstellung mit Joyce wäre zu ergänzen, was dem Verfasser, glaub [sic] ich, aus meinen früheren Arbeiten doch noch unbekannt ist. Eine stilistische Analyse meiner früheren Sachen würde manches aus der Anähnlichung an Joyce und der Unterscheidung



sehr klar ergeben. Vor allem habe ich meine Technik aus der psychoanalytischen Tätigkeit, aber sehe auch da ihre Begrenzung,--es giebt eben auch da formbildende Zielstrebigkeit" (B, p. 165). After his postwar return to Germany, Döblin, the editor of Das Goldene Tor, devoted considerable attention to certain points Paul Lüth raised in his recently submitted manuscript "Die geistigen Strömungen in der Literatur der Gegenwart." In his 1947 letter to Lüth, Döblin advanced arguments which closely resemble those later taken up in his behalf by others. Referring to Lüth's coupling of Döblin and Joyce "in the usual way," he maintained that he had not the slightest thing to do with the Irish writer as far as content and ideas were concerned. Moreover, his work's formal aspects had decidedly non-Celtic antecedents. The novel's scenic arrangement and intercutting were already apparent in Wallenstein and originated in film montage; the old literary legacy of interior monologue had been partially derived from authorial interpolations; associative technique originated in psychoanalysis. Concluding his self-defense, he advised:

Also koppeln sie mich wenigstens, da Sie doch den alten Schlendrian nicht mitmachen wollen, von diesem irischen Experimentator ab und zeigen Sie, dass es in der Zeit, wie man doch auf allen Gebieten weiss, viele gleichlaufende und anklingende Bewegungen gibt und Strömungen sind, die gleichzeitig an vielen Stellen, unter völlig anderen Umständen aufbrechen. Besser, tiefer und umfassender als die bei Zeitungskritikern beliebte Methode, Einflüsse zu konstatieren und Abhängigkeiten zu konstruieren, ist es, das gemeinsame Wachstum auf verschiedenem Boden zu ungefähr gleicher Zeit zu konstatieren. Das Sahen wir beim Expressionismus. Das sieht man jetzt beim Surrealismus und zwar bei Leuten, die bestimmt keine Kenntnisse der französischen Bewegung haben (B, p. 377).

Not surprisingly, when Lüth's essay appeared later that year in Das



Goldene Tor (2, Nos. 11/12, 1039-50), it contained no traces of the offending passages.

Since the frequently mentioned Joycean influence and affinities became the contentious issue for Döblin, it was to this association that he addressed himself. On the subject of Dos Passos and Manhattan Transfer, he remained curiously silent. As Joris Duytschaeffer's survey of the double influence controversy surrounding Alexanderplatz has submitted, Döblin's 1927 Vossische Zeitung mention of translations of unnamed American works indicating a happy advance over the prevalent Zola-like tendency of U.S. writing seems to refer to Manhattan Transfer as well as to the plays of O'Neill. Outside this example and one reference to Dos Passos as a customarily cited influence in Döblin's 1930-31 Czech interview, however, the single published comment on the American occurs as a brief allusion to U.S.A. in Döblin's 1938 survey of German exile literature. There the trilogy is deemed representative of an international tendency toward voluminous novels. During a 1956 conversation with the French Germanist Robert Minder, Döblin is reported to have distinguished between the "homophonic" composition of his own Alexanderplatz and the polyphonic composition of U.S.A. No specific mention is made of Dos Passos' earlier Manhattan Transfer, however. This apparent lack of interest in a work with which Döblin was probably familiar and which, for a variety of reasons, would have intrigued him, is particularly striking. In view of the difficulties which attended his acknowledged reading of Ulysses, it is not unreasonable to suggest a desire on his part to avoid further immersion in the subject of sources and influences.<sup>23</sup>





### Traditional Affiliations in Recent Scholarship

Although Döblin's protestations appear to have been heeded by a number of his German and Germanist commentators, a survey of the Döblin criticism of the past three decades reveals that it has been almost impossible to avoid traditional acknowledgments of the long-standing associations. Noting a fundamental consistency in approaches to the subject from its earliest through its most recent treatments, Duytschaever has distinguished three dominant critical positions: (1) the assignment of Döblin to Joyce's immediate followers, (2) stress on Döblin-Joyce analogies with the influence question held in abeyance, and (3) a radical challenge to the claims of Joyce's influence attended by either accentuation of Döblin's individuality or reference to common sources for related features in Ulysses or Alexanderplatz.<sup>24</sup> While suggestions have sometimes been made with respect to different ways of confronting the Joyce-Döblin relationship, it is apparent that the controversy has had an inhibiting affect on their pursuit. Adherents of influence or imitation in the areas of quotations, slang, associative technique, biblical parallels, and classical allusions can be found among those receptive and those hostile to Döblin's work.<sup>25</sup> Far more prevalent, however, are those commentators who describe Döblin's novel as a corresponding narrative experiment and briefly note Alexanderplatz's connection with Ulysses or Manhattan Transfer, or both, through their metropolitan themes and their exploitation of similar techniques. Variations of the dominant tendency can be observed in the opinions expressed by the same critic over an extended period of time. Such is the case with Fritz Martini. The eminent German scholar first offered



a 1956 recognition of a link, yet to be precisely interpreted, between Alexanderplatz and Ulysses in the area of erlebte Rede. He progressed to a 1961 recognition of correspondences in their expressions of surrealistic psychologism and finally made a 1969 recommendation for less talk of influence and more of analogous developments in form.<sup>26</sup>

Previous efforts to affirm Döblin's independence and to deny influence by emphasizing his differences from his predecessors are repeated in newer readings of the texts. On occasion such attempts involve partially debatable interpretations, as in Albrecht Schöne's differentiation between the functions of interior monologue in Alexanderplatz and Ulysses. It is true, as Schöne observes, that the Joycean variant serves the function of individuation more than anything else; yet Schöne fails to recognize that sections of Ulysses reveal the development of collective language he sees created throughout Alexanderplatz. What distinguishes some of these more recent disclaimers of influence, imitation, and inspiration is their reliance upon Döblin's own testimony. The most notable example is furnished by Walter Muschg's triple repudiation in 1961 of his original assertion of derivativeness. The same volte-face appears in three publications. Each one dismisses the intimations of reliance upon Ulysses, upholds the correctness of Döblin's protest, and notes the antecedence of the Berlin novel's epic radicalism in the initiatives of Döblin's Sturm years.<sup>27</sup>

The position represented by Muschg has been taken up in more recent Döblin scholarship, much of it more circumspect and thorough than earlier criticism. If such studies restate Döblin's own arguments, then they also corroborate them by the evidence of the pre-Alexanderplatz



production. Many are valuable for their attention to Döblin's early technical innovation and the existence of allegedly Joycean features in work which predates Ulysses itself and Döblin's familiarity with it. Some of these efforts are, nevertheless, not entirely free of a certain degree of shortsightedness. In their advocacy of Döblin's originality they sometimes neglect to admit that a profound contrast exists between the general isolation and partial exploitation of such devices as interior monologue, wordplays, parody, montage, et cetera, and their full development and varied combination in the 1929 novel.<sup>28</sup>

On the whole the majority of Döblin critics have tended not to explore the problem of influence or affinity in any detail. But coincident with the Döblin renaissance which began in the 1960s, several students of his work began demonstrating sufficient interest in the subject of associations to pay it closer attention. In combination with each other their suggestions and conclusions serve as substantial footnotes to the decade-long controversy. Since these contributions form a partial background to the present study, their evidence merits some recapitulations here.

Helmut Becker's inquiry into Döblin's epic work (as exemplified by Berlin Alexanderplatz alone) offers no more than what its author describes as a fragmentary attempt at possible comparisons of Döblin's metropolitan novel with those of Joyce and Dos Passos. The description is an accurate one, for this section of Becker's study essentially provides enumeration of traditionally cited technical devices shared by Alexanderplatz with Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer. It leaves undeveloped its more interesting and original observations on narrative





modes in Ulysses and Alexanderplatz. As such, this section furnishes few new insights into an old problem. With regard to the influence controversy Becker takes up the claim of Döblin's originality by calling attention to antecedents for Alexanderplatz in some of Döblin's earlier Berlin portraits, notably the journalism of the 1920s. He also asserts the existence of the alleged Joycean features in that first quarter of the work which preceded Döblin's reading of Ulysses. More pertinent than Becker's assumption of this defense, however, is his discussion of the novel's evolution. It is here that his study provides a foundation for subsequent complementary and corrective investigations. Partial comparative examination of some of the earlier and later manuscript versions and the printed text **itself** suggests to Becker that the novel originally focused more on the depiction of Berlin than on the Biberkopf action. This feature is attested by the longer manuscript passages, some of which rely upon montage, evoking the city's atmosphere.<sup>29</sup>

Francis Lide's subsequent investigation of Berlin Alexanderplatz within the broader context of Döblin's literary practice, particularly that of his earlier novels and stories, builds upon Becker's work and advances important new suggestions. Furthermore, Lide's "preliminary contribution toward answering the question of the extent and nature of Döblin's indebtedness to Joyce and Dos Passos,"<sup>30</sup> raises some major points which others have traditionally overlooked. He notes, for example, both the failed attempt to write a novel with a contemporary setting in Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfturbine (1918) and the German's reluctance to deal with contemporary Berlin again in a novel until, as





Döblin explained in the 1955 Nachwort to Alexanderplatz, he had learned it was possible to write about the city without imitating Zola (BA, p. 510). Lide speculates that the return to present-day Berlin in Alexanderplatz may well have been stimulated by acquaintance with Manhattan Transfer. On the basis of the differences between earlier and later versions of the novel, Lide proposes that initially the Alexanderplatz manuscript bore traces of Manhattan Transfer's influence. As the writing progressed, this influence subsided with the resultant shortening or deletion of Dos Passos-like passages. While he admits that there is no conclusive proof of Döblin's familiarity with the American novel coincident with the writing of Alexanderplatz, Lide offers material which nevertheless suggests the strong probability of such an acquaintance.

Three months before the complete novel's publication by S. Fischer, Döblin's own publisher, a preprint of Paul Baudisch's translation of Manhattan Transfer appeared in the July 1927 issue of Die Neue Rundschau. Prefacing the extract were the managing editor's comments. They described the American's work as one of the most important attempts to express the meaning and music of modern life in new form and content. Lide reasonably submits that Döblin would probably have subscribed to the magazine issued by his own publisher. (We might add here that Döblin's writing frequently appeared in the journal.) Furthermore, with his keen interest in his own work's reception, Döblin would have been particularly attracted to this issue for its inclusion of Fritz Landsberger's review of Manas. Finally, as one who paid close attention to new artistic developments, Döblin would likely have been



drawn to the preprint on the basis of Rudolf Kayser's remarks.<sup>31</sup>

Inspection of the Dos Passos text reveals that several of its episodes are distinguished by some of the very techniques (for example, the inclusion of sensory impressions, song fragments, and the montage of foreign material in interior monologue) extensively exploited in Döblin's own novel which do not figure as largely in Ulysses' city portrait. Nowhere does the preprint, with its restriction to scenes from Jimmy Herf's earlier years and to metropolitan passages, indicate the polyphonic quality of the entire novel (Lide, pp. 190-195). The reading of the preprint, Lide concludes, may have sufficiently aroused Döblin's interest in an examination of the complete translation shortly after its October publication. One of the few commentators to sensibly remark on the very pronounced differences between the provincial, less uniquely modern Dublin of 1904 and the Berlin of 1927-29, Lide observes that the Irish city's urban aspects are not emphasized throughout most of Ulysses. Consequently, he believes it far more likely that the American writer's treatment of New York, a city to which Berlin was far more comparable, could have exerted a decisive influence upon Döblin's choice of setting and the manner of its depiction.

In his development of that other half of the traditional association, the Joyce-Döblin relationship, Lide relies upon external and internal evidence as the means for setting chronological limits for his assessment. Establishing an approximate date for the reading of Ulysses that coincides with the writing of Book II, he concludes that Joyce probably provided hints for the style parodies which begin appearing in the second book of Alexanderplatz. The section's



composition, in Lide's opinion, most likely coincides with the time in which Döblin read Ulysses. Besides comparing some of the features of the style parodies in Ulysses and Alexanderplatz, Lide also notes what has been consistently overlooked in every treatment of or reference to the subject: the very obvious and close correspondences between the style parodies and successively changing narrative modes in Döblin's 1928 "Erster Rückblick," and the same features in Ulysses.

On the basis of such evidence, Lide suggests that the autobiographical piece is a testing of elements Döblin valued in Ulysses.<sup>32</sup>

Picking up where some of Lide's work ends, Breon Mitchell's contribution challenges the total reliability of Becker's conclusions which derive from only a partial examination of the manuscript versions. Mitchell's 1971 "Joyce and Döblin: At the Crossroads of Berlin Alexanderplatz" purports to corroborate old suspicions. Examination of the manuscript, separation of the first drafts from the later additions in the reworked pages, and their comparison with the printed version leads Mitchell to uphold the legitimacy of the influence claim. The wide use of interior monologue, newspaper headlines and article fragments, Book II's montage of city impressions which have always been considered strongly reminiscent of the "Wandering Rocks" episode, the insertions of advertisements halfway through the second book, the introduction of the commercial world into the mind of the protagonist, and the parodies of scientific language all constitute additions to the draft version. Consequently, Mitchell concludes that "Having read Ulysses sometime in the winter of 1927-28, Döblin made use of those elements which particularly appealed to his own sense of what a novel





should be" (p. 185). To the credit of his study, Mitchell devotes some attention to Döblin's attitude toward the identification with Joyce. That the German writer's reactions were more complex than has usually been recognized and that he even identified closely with Joyce in the early 1930s become only too clear from the biographical evidence Mitchell provides.

For all its apparent conclusiveness, Mitchell's evidence remains somewhat open to question, as Duytschaever has rightly contended. In his 1975 survey of the double influence controversy, he points out certain problems in Mitchell's chronology for the addition of Joycean features (p. 148). They arise from the physical character of Döblin's manuscript itself. Moreover, when referring to Manfred Beyer's study of the novel's genesis, which traces origins in the body of journalism and satirical glosses Döblin authored following the war,<sup>33</sup> Duytschaever reasserts a legitimate prehistory for the Berlin novel within Döblin's own oeuvre. At the same time he acknowledges the probable and certain impact of the encounters with Manhattan Transfer and Ulysses upon Döblin. Strengthening some of Lide's earlier suppositions, Duytschaever (pp. 143-145) advances additional suggestions for Döblin's likely acquaintance with Manhattan Transfer. These include: (1) a possible recommendation for the work from his friend Oskar Loerke, who was strongly impressed by the American novel in early 1927 and was then engaged in the collaborative preparation of Döblin's fiftieth-birthday Festschrift, (2) a probable second pre-publication contact with the German translation through another preprint's appearance in the Fischer Verlag's October Almanach 1928, the same yearbook containing extracts



from Döblin's own Das Ich über der Natur and Manas, and (3) the likely allusion to Manhattan Transfer in the favorable response to unspecified examples of non-Naturalistic American writing that appeared in the December 1927 Vossische Zeitung. Simultaneously, however, Duytschaever insists upon injecting precision into the traditional dialogue. With a view toward collective influences from the broad spectrum of European avantgardism, a traditional claim whose soundness is strengthened by the increasing recognition that all of Döblin's imaginative literature received stimuli from a wide variety of sources,<sup>34</sup> Duytschaever reminds us that expressive tendencies already existed in Döblin's earlier production. Consequently, Duytschaever maintains that the Irish and American writers' effects upon Döblin were catalytic rather than formative (pp. 149-150).

The four-decade controversy surrounding Alexanderplatz has no equivalent in the case of Manhattan Transfer. Early recognition of the work's indebtedness to Ulysses by critics both receptive and hostile to Dos Passos' novel was never challenged. It has become, for the most part, a commonplace acknowledgment rather than a subject for exploitation. The early view of Manhattan Transfer as the unsuccessful product of an Irish inspiration has not gained wide currency, and its reappearance in the curious "postlude" to Melvin Friedman's Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method (1955) can be ranked as an isolated example. Based on the thesis that Joyce's work is the fullest development of the stream of consciousness tradition, Friedman's study concludes with a brief survey of those works he deems abortive attempts to "rewrite Ulysses" or else minor contributions to the tradition which



invariably suffer by comparison with Ulysses. Friedman's "failures" include both Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer; his treatment of the latter recognizes the distinctive features of Dos Passos' collective method exclusively in terms of an unsuccessful attempt to duplicate Joyce.<sup>35</sup>

In the main less prejudicial, more detailed considerations of Dos Passos' work are characterized by the tendency to note formal or technical similarity, frequently in the area of interior monologue, which is attributed to familiarity with Ulysses. The source of Manhattan Transfer's metropolitan portrait is held to be Joycean as well, as was true in the aforementioned early reviews. In all cases, however, both influence and affinities are unelaborated. Criticism relies instead on the reference to the general stimulus in novelistic experimentation and technique provided by Joyce's Ulysses and, to a lesser extent, his earlier writing.<sup>36</sup>

If Döblin scholarship sometimes displayed an inclination toward ambiguous source-citing and also suggested a coalescence of sources, something similar holds true for statements of origin regarding Manhattan Transfer's specific features. As is underscored by a number of serious treatments of Dos Passos' work, his novel bears the impress of a host of artistic developments from a variety of domains. Furthermore, what is usually regarded as exclusively Joyce-derived, the metropolitan portrait of New York, may be the combined products of encounters with experimental cinema and American city fiction.<sup>37</sup> Among those who have emphasized Manhattan Transfer's multiple origins and analogues, French literary and film scholar Georges-Albert Astre acknowledges the

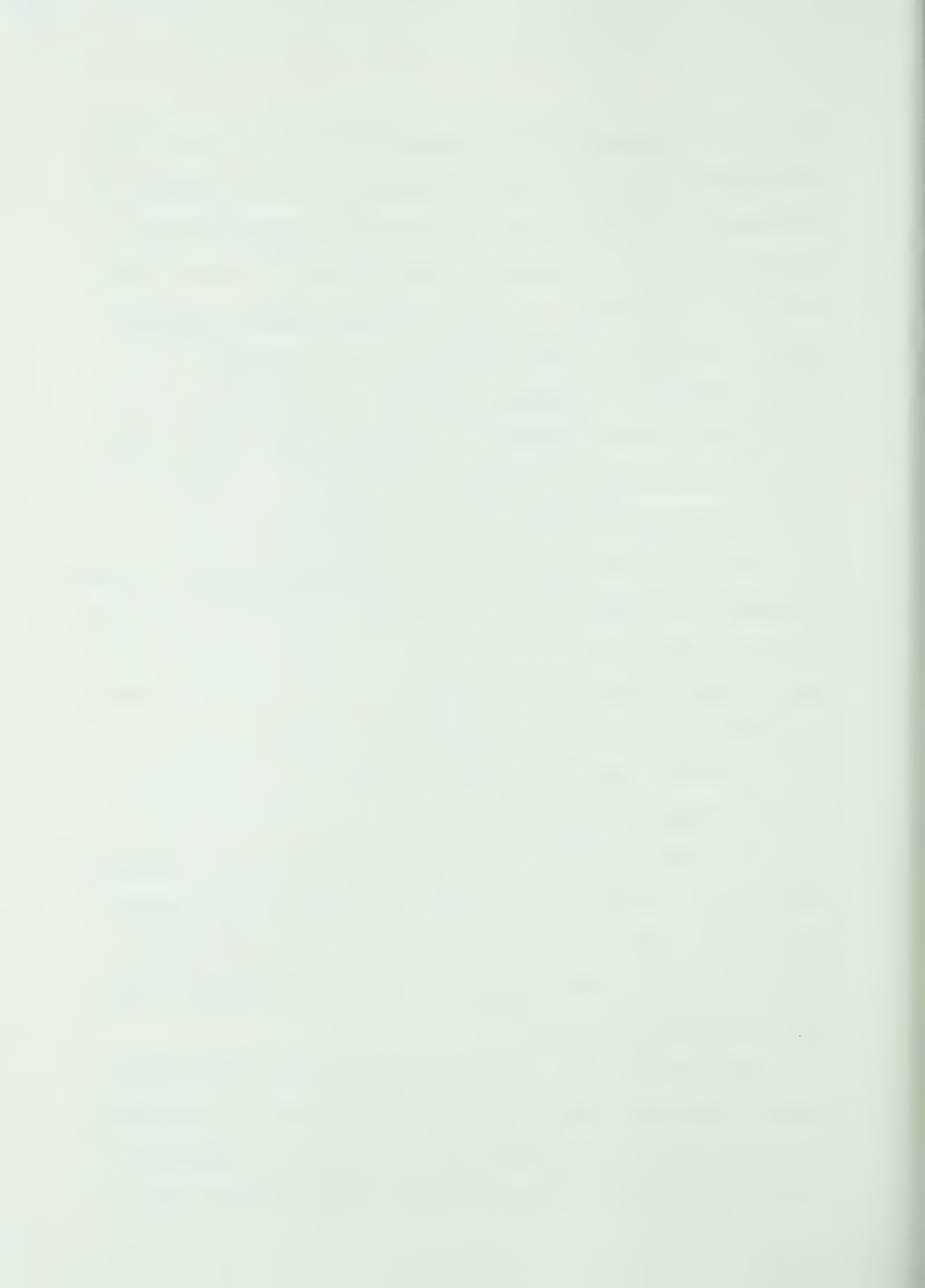




limitations of a narrowly Joycean context for viewing Dos Passos' novel. Significantly, some of the problems inherent in a Joycean approach are demonstrated by the single piece of scholarship exclusively devoted to the Dos Passos-Joyce relationship, Marshall McLuhan's "John Dos Passos: Technique vs. Sensibility." It approaches Three Soldiers, Manhattan Transfer, and U.S.A. as simplifications of Joyce's technique in the Portrait, Dubliners, and Ulysses. As was more acutely evident in some of the English-language assessments of Alexanderplatz, McLuhan's essay frequently reveals more of a response to Joyce than to Dos Passos. It cannot be denied that the essay seizes upon significant differences between the two writers' works. Apropos of Manhattan Transfer, Dubliners, and Ulysses, for example, McLuhan distinguishes between the exploitation of Dublin as both part of an analogy of total being and a symbol of the general human condition and the dual use of New York as a "phantasmagoric backdrop" for characters' frustrations and defeats and as a means of social criticism. Yet as Astre justifiably argues, McLuhan neglects fundamental points of divergence in the artistic purpose of the two writers and, more important, in the demands imposed by their respective subject matter: "Faut-il le souligner? Il n'est que peu de rapports entre les deux cités! New York n'est pas Dublin: la reconciliation [c'est-à-dire, de "l'homme et le monde, l'histoire et le mythe"] semble quasi impossible à Dos Passos."<sup>38</sup>

This French balance for the oversimplification of Dos Passos' work that often marks English-language criticism points up the dramatic discrepancy between the American writer's national and international stature. Within his own country Dos Passos' work has almost always





elicited ambivalent reactions, many of them based upon its depiction of U.S. society and its author's changing political attitudes. Indeed, as has recently been noted, U.S. critics "have shown far more interest in Dos Passos' politics than in his novels."<sup>39</sup> No doubt there is some significance that the one treatment of the Joycean associations in Dos Passos' writing has been done by a Canadian. In spite of its advancement of a number of valid points of comparison, however, McLuhan's essay essentially reflects much of the bias of his southern neighbors. Beginning with the first full-length German survey of Dos Passos' work up through Manhattan Transfer in 1931, it has largely fallen to other foreign scholars to recognize dimensions in the American's fiction beyond those customarily seen in journalism, social history, American naturalism, and the proletarian novel.<sup>40</sup>

With the exception of Blanche Gelfant's important investigation of Manhattan Transfer as an example of the "synoptic" variant of The American City Novel (1954), these foreign interpretations were for some time unique in their recognition of the 1925 novel as more than a mere prelude to U.S.A. Even more important, their consideration of Manhattan Transfer as a striking counterpart to artistic experimentation in a variety of spheres has provided the impetus for the novel's closer analysis in the U.S. itself.<sup>41</sup> A variety of factors must account for Manhattan Transfer's international appeal. Not the least of these is its fusion of experimental techniques with social criticism and with the phenomenon of the twentieth-century megalopolis. Although its impact on the U.S. form has been considerably less than Sinclair Lewis had hoped, the importance of Manhattan Transfer for a number of



significant European and American efforts has been far-reaching. Its implications for novelistic treatments of Buenos Aires, Arzobispado, Madrid, and Mexico City in Juan Carlos Onetti's Tierra de nadie (1941), Agustín Yáñez's Al filo del agua (1947) and Ojerosa y pintada (1960), Camilo José Cela's La colmena (1951), and Carlos Fuentes' La región más transparente (1958) are commonly acknowledged.<sup>42</sup> Such international consequences may well stimulate Anglophone criticism toward a further shift from the kind of interpretations heretofore associated with the Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer relationship.

It is in this same English-language domain that the popular view of Döblin's work launched by the reception of Alexanderplatz, Berlin in 1931 has prevailed. The previously cited "postlude" to Friedman's Stream of Consciousness (1955) dismisses Döblin's novel as an "abortive attempt to write another Ulysses" and ranks its author as Joyce's "leading German disciple and imitator" (p. 251). Later evidence is furnished by Leon Edel's 1961 essay "Literature and Psychology," an exploration of the common ground shared by the two domains and the influence of psychoanalysis upon imaginative writing. Without any apparent knowledge of the German writer's non-literary career as both psychiatrist and neurologist or real familiarity with the nature of his novels, Edel terms Döblin "the chief exponent in Germany of the Joycean experiments" and mentions him briefly and exclusively in connection with Joyce, who provided the novel of inner vision with its particular development. This new variation of Grass's Versimplung eines Schriftstellers is perpetuated by the 1968 Frederick Ungar reprint of the translation's earlier Viking Press edition. Both front and back



covers of the paperback version prominently announce the novel's adaptation of "the insight and technique of James Joyce's Ulysses" and proclaim it "the first novel in modern German literature to follow the technique made famous by Joyce." That the distinction of being a German "first" in this area more accurately belongs to Hans Henny Jahn's Perrudja is less important than the continuation of the old equations for both Döblin and his work.<sup>43</sup>

Given the longevity of such a view, the tenacity of the German disputants of the 1960s is easily understood. Within the past two decades a renewal of interest in Döblin's writing reveals that a number of readers are, as Grass hoped, discovering Döblin's importance for his own work. Such a development also indicates that Grass's expression of esteem for a significantly "anticlassical" writer aroused interest in more than one case.<sup>44</sup> By doing so, the Berlin Academy speech bolstered efforts already under way within East and West Germany to promote the work of a writer whose postwar neglect was partially related to his persona non grata status as the French military government's employee and as a suddenly pious Roman Catholic convert. More recently Döblin has re-entered the international arena; his pre-Alexanderplatz work is once again viewed in conjunction with the major artistic trends of the early part of the century, his novel theory is interpreted as a forerunner of the nouveau roman, and his imaginative writing is perceived within the context of the world literature from which it derived much impetus.<sup>45</sup>

Such signs indicate marked improvement in the condition of Döblin's reputation. They offset not only his exclusive identification





with Alexanderplatz but this novel's traditionally limiting association with its alleged models. They also counteract the narrowly technical approach to the Alexanderplatz-Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer relationship that has restricted its focus to cause-and-effect accounts of specific stylistic and technical components in Döblin's novel. Unfortunately, the few attempts to move outside the boundaries of influence or adaptation and to deal with the respective relationships in terms of parallelisms in theme and subject matter do not constitute significant advances in this area. They have been hampered by their concern with the most obvious and frequently reiterated correspondences, a tendency toward enumeration instead of analysis, and some erroneous interpretations or misinformation about their subjects.

Four representative studies illustrate the general tendencies. Despite its apparent unfamiliarity with important primary and secondary sources--conceivably unavailable at the time--Henri Szulanski's 1950 *Mémoire de Licence*, "Eine Parallele zwischen James Joyces Ulysses und Alfred Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," attempts to probe some of the more interesting correspondences in the exploitation of mythology, linguistic diversity, and in the general rejection of Naturalism. At the same time the study projects dubious biographical similarities like equivalent social commitment and psychoanalytic knowledge. Leon Titcher's essay "Döblin and Dos Passos: Aspects of the City Novel" (1971) is apparently designed for an audience unfamiliar with Döblin's work. In its attention to the urban theme and Zeitgeschichte features of the two novels, it isolates their similarities and differences in the nature and method of the city's presentation: the city as motif in Alexanderplatz



and protagonist in Manhattan Transfer, the shared use of Nebenerzählungen and multiple perspectives. Since it does so in a rudimentary way, however, Titcher's contribution requires the support of the complementary and far more substantial scholarship provided by Volker Klotz's Die erzählte Stadt, a 1969 survey approaching both Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz as two of several major examples of the "narrated city." The affinities between Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz receive attention as well in Raymond Banks' "Time and the Times: A Comparative Study of John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer and Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz." Subscribing to the theory of "simultaneous occurrences" to account for the striking similarities between the novels, Banks's slight and poorly documented M.A. thesis purports to examine the works as responses to their times and as particular thematic treatments of time. As is apparent in its enumeration of the ways in which the temporal experience is structured (for example, as duration and flux), Banks's study is not without its occasionally useful observation. It does nothing, however, to fulfill the expectations aroused by its title. In addition, serious flaws originating in the neglect of important primary sources are compounded by faulty premises based upon an erroneous assessment of Dos Passos' intellectual position in the early 1920s. That mistake originates from, among other things, an unawareness that Dos Passos' "position statement" of 1932, the "Introduction" to a new edition of Three Soldiers, did not appear a decade earlier in the original publication. More accurate than Banks's effort but nevertheless superficial in its use of sources, Andrew McLean's fairly recent "Joyce's Ulysses and Döblin's Alexanderplatz,



Berlin " appears, like Titcher's essay, to address itself to readers largely unfamiliar with Döblin's work. Although McLean emphasizes the two works' sharing of a common theme, urban man's spiritual odyssey, most of his discussion lists the traditionally cited similarities in style parodies, interior monologue, descriptive or factual material, and biblical parallels without coherently demonstrating the extent to which such devices illustrate them. Moreover, his conclusion's stress on likenesses in characterization, particularly its perception of analogous Bildung on the part of Biberkopf and Bloom and its non-recognition of fundamental differences between the two protagonists, transforms a potentially interesting study into a rather questionable one.<sup>46</sup>

The foregoing clearly points up the absence of more comprehensive analyses in which shared features and distinct functions are simultaneously revealed. If our survey has emphasized the dynamics involved in literary fortune and reception and the significance of intermediaries in the process, it has also alluded to those complexities inherent in studies of literary relationships. Most noticeable have been those difficulties associated with literary indebtedness where the necessary differentiations which exist with respect to imitation, adaptation, borrowings, tradition, convention, collectively shared influences, parallels, and affinities have not been observed. As is quite apparent, the application of "influence," in itself a problematic concept, has proven especially troublesome. Far too often its simplistic exploitation "as the determining cause and unique source of a literary creation" has reduced the study of Berlin Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer to





precisely those positivistic rapports de fait and external relationships which students of literature increasingly view as limited in value.<sup>47</sup> Attention to the more literary internal relationships, the aesthetic interactions within the works themselves, would have proven more fruitful in many cases. In addition, the traditional isolation of parallel passages and similar devices, even those most obvious thematic correspondences, common to adherents of influence and affinity alike has shed only partial light on the character of the Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer-Alexanderplatz relationship.

While those treatments specifically dealing with aspects of the relationship--Ulysses with Manhattan Transfer, Ulysses with Alexanderplatz, Manhattan Transfer with Alexanderplatz--have not generally advanced very far, neither Döblin nor Dos Passos scholarship is lacking in interesting proposals for more productive exploration. Fritz Martini's urging the consideration of Döblin's, Dos Passos', and Joyce's work as analogous developments of form most assuredly ranks among such suggestions. The same can be said for Günther Anders' observation that Ulysses and Alexanderplatz share the common theme of non-revolutionary modern literature, the activity of language in combination with the passivity of life. Duytschaever's contrast between the total comprehensiveness of Ulysses and the dominant social focus of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz has implications for the type of expanded novel represented by the three works. Astre's deceptively obvious assertion apropos of Manhattan Transfer that Dos Passos had assimilated a great number of experiments, including the cinematic, "ayant toutes pour objet de prendre conscience de l'homme



moderne et d'en traduire la condition," holds far-reaching possibilities for exploring the kinship of the American and German novels.<sup>48</sup>

Equally instructive deviations from the well-worn route are furnished by a number of broad surveys which include all three works within a particular phase of the novel's development. Whereas influence is sometimes asserted, usually in only general terms, it is never the central concern in such studies. Walter Jens's interpretive survey of the post-1922 possibilities for the novel in the wake of Proust and Joyce, for example, briefly acknowledges influence from Joyce upon Dos Passos and recognizes influence from both Dos Passos and Joyce upon Döblin. Yet this essay, "Uhren ohne Zeiger. Die Struktur des modernen Romans," focuses on the distinctive, as opposed to the imitative or adaptive, features of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. As departures in the novel, they reveal the depiction of a time and place-bound mass physiognomy (Manhattan Transfer) and the emergence of the individual and city as protagonists on equal terms (Alexanderplatz). Joseph Warren Beach's Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique, an early and therefore rudimentary tracing of certain distinguishing formal features in the English-language novel, infers Dos Passos' acquaintance with Ulysses for the writing of Manhattan Transfer. In the case of Alexanderplatz, Berlin Beach enumerates specific adaptations of Joyce's street car lines, "Wandering Rocks" episode, and symbolic parallels, and lists those features (newsreels, popular songs and ballad fragments as narrative accompaniments) Döblin's novel shares with Manhattan Transfer and U.S.A. The broad view of Beach's survey, however, is one which considers the work of Joyce, Dos Passos, and



Döblin as examples of "expressionism," here interpreted as formal modernism tending toward abstract composition.<sup>49</sup>

A more formalistic, updated counterpart to Beach's study which similarly emphasizes the drive toward abstraction, that pervasive impulse Worringer saw in modern art, is provided in Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel. Concentrating less on individual novels and more on particular manifestations of their dominant aspect, an "architectonic" character, Sharon Spencer surveys a range of works extending from the experiments of the 1920s through the French nouveau roman and the Spanish-American neuva novela. Their common feature is structural rather than thematic or stylistic, and the novels of Joyce, Dos Passos, and Döblin exemplify a designed "illusion of a spatial entity, either representational or abstract, constructed from prose fragments of diverse types and lengths and arranged by means of the principle of juxtaposition so as to include a comprehensive view of the book's subject" (pp. xx-xxi).

Less traditional approaches are also evident in the work of Volker Klotz, Claude Gandelman, and Michel Zérafra. Spanning three centuries, Klotz's inquiry into the changing relationship between the city and the novel, Die erzählte Stadt, treats Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz as specific developments of the "narrated city"; Gandelman's textual explication of the relationship between narrative technique and reader response in the works of six writers includes passages from the work of Dos Passos and Döblin; Zérafra's interpretive surveys are designed to isolate and generalize the distinctive features of the twentieth-century Western European and U.S.





novel.<sup>50</sup>

These examples clearly demonstrate that there are dimensions to a Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer-Alexanderplatz relationship beyond those within which observers have traditionally confined their efforts. Their fixation on surface details has prohibited sight of the more fundamental underlying points of convergence and divergence. Customary source-seeking has often been hampered by precisely what Döblin affirmed as the existence of psychoanalytical, cinematic, Expressionistic, and Dada sources instead of Irish ones. A related and equally valid claim is explicit in Dos Passos' proviso to his political biographer, Landsberg, that "everyone is influenced by everything he reads, sees hears etc." Just as important as this confluence of sources are those attempts prior to and coincident with Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz which find Dos Passos and Döblin working in areas outside the novel and prose fiction: theatre, poetry, journalism, cinema, and painting. In a very specific sense it is no chance coincidence that the two novels struck their early readers as reminiscent of developments in contemporary cinema, music, painting, and theatre.<sup>51</sup> At the same time it is undeniable that Ulysses created a profound impression upon both writers. In Döblin's case the response is verified by the numerous comments made between 1928 and 1955 which continued to praise Ulysses even as Döblin increasingly refuted the charges of Joycean influence and imitation. Although Dos Passos proved less articulate and frequent in his statements about the same work and its author, albeit more succinct about the fundamental sources of Joyce's writing ("Pedantry and introversion are the materials he builds his work of."),<sup>52</sup> he placed great value on Ulysses. Each one



tended to emphasize its specific features which most appealed to their particular sensibilities; yet both Dos Passos and Döblin recognized in Ulysses a major advance for the modern novel. Neither Döblin's interpretation of Ulysses as a significant attempt to answer the question "How can one write today?" nor Dos Passos' understanding that it denied rumors of the novel's demise are uniquely or profoundly penetrating. What is striking about them, however, is a comprehension of Joyce's work which has direct bearing upon their own. In this respect their assessments suggest hitherto unexplored routes by which their novels' affiliation with Ulysses might be best explored.



International Encounters and Corroboration  
from Abroad

Of the two writers, the American was the first to become acquainted with Ulysses and even with its author. Dos Passos was introduced to both while passing through France in late January 1922 en route to New York after a five-month journey through the Middle East: "Coming through Paris I bought an early copy of Ulysses and even shook the limp hand of a pale uninterested man in dark glasses sitting beside the stove in the back room of Shakespeare and Company whom Miss Beach claimed was James Joyce. I read the book at one gulp while laid up with a bout of flu in a tiny inside cabin way down in the third class of one of the big transatlantic liners: parts I found boring and parts I found magnificent" (BT, p. 148).

The encounter with Joyce was by no means the first for Dos Passos. He had been sufficiently impressed with A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man to read it twice in 1918. In a diary entry from July twenty-first of that year, he expressed the hope that he would not start imitating it immediately. At the time a Dos Passos less given to sarcasm and more to youthful enthusiasm than the memoir writer of the 1960s claimed, "It is so wonderfully succinct and follows such curious byways of expression--old abandoned roads that are overgrown but where the air is cleaner than in the modern dusty thoroughfares--constantly churned by people's footsteps" (14C, p. 193). He remarked once more on the work's expressive quality in a letter to his friend Rumsey Marvin the next year and submitted that its hero was not an





uncommon type for the times (Ibid., p. 260). The reappearing hyper-sensitive Dedalus does not seem to have been of major concern to Dos Passos in his reading of Ulysses. It is the work's expressiveness, notably in its use of language, which attracts him. The quality is one which became intimately bound up with Dos Passos' approach to the novel. Significantly, in a major statement of purpose and definition, the 1932 "Introduction" for Three Soldiers, Ulysses serves as an illustration of some of Dos Passos' own ends.

Usually cited as evidence of the role Dos Passos assumed with the writing of U.S.A., the preface for a new Modern Library edition of the 1922 war novel reveals some of the interests which from 1918 on had affected his work. In its use of such phrases as "straight writing" and "working with speech straight," the introduction is strikingly Hemingway-like and Dos Passos' correspondence with Hemingway attests to the latter's indirect assistance for preparation of the introduction. Apparently an exchange with Hemingway about the early novel and about writing as a trade stimulated Dos Passos' articulation of his own views in the prefatory remarks (14C, pp. 409-410). Yet because of the work which seriously engaged his efforts at the time--a work whose prologue would conclude "But mostly U.S.A. is the speech of the people"--the preface's terminology involved more than a variation on Hemingway's fundamental dictum that "A writer's job is to tell the truth."<sup>53</sup> Dos Passos envisaged a role permitting the realization of a writer's natural inclination toward "preaching " or the desire to "convince people of something" through "straight writing." In such writing a generation's mind, reflected and captured in its speech, was preserved for posterity.



Moreover, according to Dos Passos, "A writer makes aspects of that speech enduring by putting them in print. He whittles at the words and phrases of today and makes them forms to set the mind of tomorrow's generation. That's history. A writer who writes straight is the architect of history" (pp. vii-viii). This much quoted explanation is immediately followed by an important but frequently neglected illustration. As an exponent of "straight writing," Dos Passos selects Joyce:

What I'm trying to get out is the difference in kind between the work of James Joyce, say, and that of any current dispenser of daydreams. It's not that Joyce produces for the highbrow and the other for the lowbrow trade, it's that Joyce is working with speech straight and so dominating the machine of production, while the daydream artist is merely feeding the machine, like a girl in a sausage factory shoving hunks of meat into the hopper. Whoever can run the machine runs it for all of us. Working with speech straight is vigorous absorbing devastating hopeless work, work that no man need be ashamed of.

You answer that Joyce is esoteric, only read by a few literary snobs, a luxury product like limited editions, without influence on the mass of ordinary newspaper readers. Well give him time. The power of writing is more likely to be exercised vertically through a century than horizontally over a year's sales. I don't mean either that Joyce is the only straight writer of our time, or that the influence of his powerful work hasn't already spread, diluted through other writers, into many a printed page of which the author never heard of Ulysses (p. viii).

The choice is an interesting one. Within Dos Passos' vast repertory of reading there were other writers, particularly novelists, about whom he expressed himself more enthusiastically and in greater detail. Furthermore, the Dos Passos of the 1920s and 1930s had little sense of kinship with the exclusively aesthetic pose the Irish expatriate created and maintained for himself with the writing of Ulysses. Nevertheless, in a representative way Joyce's work



justified the "trade of novelist" (p. vi). By doing so, it offset those inferior goods Dos Passos saw produced by pulpwriters and self-expressionists. More important, the type of writing Ulysses exemplified was compatible with an approach toward literature in general and the novel in particular that Dos Passos deemed both necessary and desirable in the twentieth century. As subsequent discussion will reveal, it was an approach necessitated by a dramatically altered relationship between man and milieu in an industrial era. The perception of this relationship and its implications for American literature are intimately allied with Dos Passos' earliest writing. It is first successfully realized, however, in Manhattan Transfer.

The retrospective nature of Dos Passos' Ulysses commentary limits precision about his specific reactions at the time of his initial reading of the work. For Döblin the situation is rather different. Like Dos Passos, the German writer was to experience a comprehension of Ulysses closely connected with his own novelistic goals. During the Paris exile of the late 1930s, he was also to face a similarly unproductive meeting with Ulysses' author. Unfortunately, regarding the latter event we have only the testimony of Robert Minder and his recording of Döblin's own "Wir sahen uns und schwiegen" [Minder's italics]. According to Heinrich Straumann, who knew Joyce in Zurich, the Irish writer attributed particular significance to the fact that the first German disciple of his technique bore a surname resembling Joyce's native city. In light of these reports, we can only speculate about the nature of the Paris introduction of Döblin to Joyce.<sup>54</sup> Speculation is unnecessary, however, about Döblin's encounter with





Joyce's novel. He stated his views about the work shortly after his introduction to the Georg Goyert translation of Ulysses.

Sometime in 1928 Döblin, who apparently received a copy of the work from the editor-in-chief of Das deutsche Buch shortly after Ulysses' German-language publication, specifically commented on Ulysses to his friend Brecht. Responding to a Tagebuch questionnaire (December 18, 1929), Brecht subsequently listed his first selection among the best books of 1928 as "Der Roman Ulysses vom James Joyce, weil er nach Ansicht Döblins die Situation des Roman verändert hat und als Sammlung verschiedener Methoden der Betrachtung (Einführung des inneren Monologs und so weiter) ein unentbehrliches Nachschlagewerk für Schriftsteller darstellt." Almost a year later in November 1929, Döblin, a frequent contributor to the best book surveys in his own right, named Ulysses as one of the twelve works from the postwar period he would take with him during a year's stay on a hypothetical south sea isle.<sup>55</sup> But it is hardly necessary to consult such sources for an indication of Döblin's admiration for Ulysses. Even while he repudiated the association with Joyce later in his career, Döblin parenthetically noted his esteem for the Irish writer's methods, as is evident from the "Epilog" (AzL, p. 391). Exactly to what extent is clearly discernible in Döblin's critical discussions of literature.

"Schriftstellerei und Dichtung," Döblin's inaugural address before the Poetry Section of the Berlin Academy of Arts (March 15, 1928) names Ulysses as a very important book for its sovereignty of language and imagination, two fundamental characteristics of the epic work of art. It was "kein Kunstwerk, aber arbeitet sich durch zu den wichtigsten



Elementen der Kunst, es kennt die unbeschränkte Souveränität der Phantasie in den dramenartigen Stücken, es kennt an vielen Stellen auch die losgelassene selbstherrliche Sprache" (AzL, pp. 287-290).

This brief interpretation reveals something of the appeal Joyce's novel held for Döblin. The same month's review of Ulysses for Das deutsche Buch proves even more enlightening for both its understanding of Joyce's work and its implications for Döblin's own.

Often given limited recognition in the context of the Ulysses-Alexanderplatz problem,<sup>56</sup> Döblin's review includes far more than identification of technical features and stylistic ideosyncracies or even enjoyment of Joyce's robust humor. Ulysses, "weder ein Roman noch eine Dichtung, sondern ein Beklopfen ihrer Grundelemente," is valued as "ein Experimentierwerk" (AzL, p. 288). As such it represents a significant freeing of artistic form, something that was intimately connected with contemporary surroundings and the spirit of time. It did so complying with the demands of contemporary subject matter. In particular, that subject matter was associated with a changed picture of experience. Among its specific manifestations were cinema's invasion into the radius of literature, the transformation of newspapers into the public's "daily bread," rapidly alternating street scenes, and billboard advertising. Beyond these, however, the new world also embraced the factors of the state and the economy. The result was the increasing diminution of the individual, now overshadowed by the collective forces around him, and the disconnectedness of man's action and being. Precisely through its coalescence of form and subject matter Ulysses signalled the novel's potential confrontation with the modern world. This indispensable



encounter was something the majority of writers, particularly German ones, tended to ignore:

Es gibt noch jetzt zahlreiche Autoren in sämtlichen Ländern--sagen wir ruhig die kompakte Majorität der Autoren,--die ihre soliden Bücher bauen, Erzählungen von grossem und kleinem Umfang abfabeln, abhaspeln, Dinge mit einem richtigen Anfang und einem richtigen Ende, als ob es so was gäbe, und die sich nie Gedanken über diese Schreibweise, Denkweise, Fabulierweise gemacht haben und denen ihr Tun nie komisch erscheint. Denn im übrigen sind diese Autoren ja heutige Privatmenschen, Bürger, die Geld verdienen, Steuer zahlen, auf die Strasse gehen usw. Man muss wissen, dass Kunstformen zusammenhängen mit einer gewissen Denkweise und einem allgemeinen Lebensmilieu. Darum werden Formen dauernd überholt. Die alten Romane unterhalten uns, sie beschäftigen unsern Kombinationssinn, sie sind der Niederschlag eines solchen Kombinationssinnes. Sie sind im übrigen verlängerte Novellen, und die Novellen verlängerte Anekdoten und Aphorismen. Diese Romane sind mehr oder weniger aphoristisch. Inzwischen--sagen wir seit den Wahlverwandtschaften--hat sich allerlei ereignet, was gegen solche Aphoristik, Isolierung eines Ablaufs ist, aber weder den Autoren noch ihrem Publikum genügend aufgefallen ist (pp. 287-288).

As the preoccupations voiced by Dos Passos in his 1932 "Introduction" are both reiteration and expansion of concerns he had already been articulating for more than a decade, especially with regard to American writing, so are Döblin's views the extension of his longstanding recognition of the need for updating German literature's form and content. Yet significantly, the Ulysses review is one of Döblin's most concise diagnoses of the modern novel's condition. Unlike some of his fellow writers and critics,<sup>57</sup> Döblin failed to see the Dublin-born exile as a present-day counterpart to the blind singer from Khíos. He understood that this twentieth-century voyage of Ulysses had little of the heroic about it. He perceived its odyssey in its passage through almost all the domains of contemporary knowledge. As much as he





recognized its energetic closing in on "dem heutigen Alltag" and its minute description of its characters, whom Döblin interpreted as "typische Gestalten wie ein Pferd, eine Tanne" (p. 289), he continued to emphasize the different manifestations of totality in Ulysses. Within its plastic, seemingly three-dimensional narrative, threaded by nineteen hours in the lives of three fairly banal Irish citizens, association served as the compositional method. In addition, each of the parts was distinguished by a form suitable to its subject and manner. Through its form and method Joyce's comprehensive Schriftwerk ultimately assumed encyclopedic dimensions. Thus its own nature--"biologisch, wissenschaftlich, exakt"--reflected that of modern man--"kenntnisreich, wissenschaftlich, exakt" (Idem.). For Döblin the novel's so-called crisis resided in the fact that "Die Mentalität der Autoren hat sich noch nicht an die Zeit angeschlossen" (p. 288). He clearly appreciated Ulysses as a demonstration of a general countervailing tendency. It is in this sense that Döblin esteemed it as "ein literarischer Vorstoss aus dem Gewissen des heutigen geistigen Menschen heraus" (p. 290).

Later that year in "Der Bau des epischen Werks," an address delivered at the University of Berlin (December 10, 1928), Döblin would elucidate in great detail his own efforts to relieve the novel's crisis (AzL, pp. 103-132). As was soon apparent, this theoretical explanation drew heavily upon the example of the current Alexanderplatz project, Döblin's latest in a series of attempts to create appropriate forms for a perceptibly changed subject matter. It was to be unparalleled among his novels for its thoroughgoing exploitation of contemporaneity and totality.



## Modernist Affinities

Neither Döblin nor Dos Passos is unique in offering the kind of insights into Joyce's work which actually revealed many more about their own. Ulysses characteristically corroborated the goals and efforts of a number of its readers. These ranged from Eliot, who saw in it an illustration of what was actually his own "mythic method" in The Waste Land, to Eisenstein, who was struck by its literary analogue for what presently intrigued him as a future film project, interior monologue.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, in their recognition of the necessary literary accommodation to radical transformations in the world outside the novel, Dos Passos and Döblin align themselves with numerous international adherents of novelistic change.

Not insignificantly, the American and German writers attempted, with varying degrees of success, to achieve similar accommodations in other areas and other media. In this respect it can be argued that much of their oeuvre reflects the dominant tendency in European and American artistic production in the decades immediately preceeding and following the First World War. It marked the often heterogeneous features of such fragmented but interrelated phenomena as Futurism, Cubism, Constructivism, Expressionism, Vorticism, Dada, Neue Sachlichkeit, and Surrealism. Both in painting and in poetry a drive toward autonomous and presentational or non-mimetic art displayed itself. It ultimately realized itself as abstraction and that liberation from materiality which removed the object from the canvas and traditional meaning from the word. Within the novel, where the tendency was most broadly



translated, it appeared variously as encyclopedism and either as increasing subjectivism or the extreme objectivism of recording undifferentiated minutiae. Its commentators have occasionally described its manifestations more specifically as a heightened spatialization of formal and temporal elements, as the atomization of character into multipersonal subjective impressions, and as the alternate presentation of character via objective experiences without recourse to psychology. In certain areas the novel becomes increasingly "cinematic," its distinguishing formal features both noticeable and inadequate literary analogues for the inherent properties of film.<sup>59</sup>

Describing these specific aspects has proven considerably easier than providing the tendency itself with a name. A satisfactory designation precise enough to identify its dominant character and yet sufficiently flexible to embrace its diverse manifestations has yet to be coined. With respect to literature the problem is aggravated by a number of factors. In the cases of programmatic movements, such as Futurism and Surrealism, there is an interaction between literature and painting which facilitates the shared use of terminology and its particular application to poetry. In other situations, most notably that of Expressionism, the literary exploitation of a term first used for painting reveals itself to be more burden than blessing. Furthermore, despite the thoughtful attempts to variously define Expressionism as a movement, period, style(s), generation, school, world view, complex of attitudes, and eternal artistic tendency, neither its definition nor the choice of its common denominators has yet been satisfactorily resolved. To date, the only unqualified





response has been the enforced equivalence between expressionistisch and entartet during the Hitler era. To a certain extent similar difficulties surround the comprehensive categorization within which Expressionism is subsumed, that of Modernism. Whether applied to the collective arts or to literature in particular, it has shown itself to be, as one literary observer has explained, "elusive and protean, and its definition hopelessly complicated."<sup>60</sup> By virtue of its availability and all-inclusiveness, however, it is the most convenient term for discussions of this kind.

Undeniably the classification is an ambiguous one. As any student of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, or late nineteenth-century Hispanic letters will attest, Modernism has several associations. These include connotations of an increasingly man-centered worldly humanism, evocation of the seventeenth-century dispute between Ancients and Moderns, and a specific reference to Modernismo, that movement which brought about a stylistic revolution in the poetry of Spanish America and Spain. All verify the legitimacy of the question "Which Modernism?" invariably elicited by the term. A response is furnished by its customary application to the general artistic trend originating in the nineteenth century which specifically describes Western European and American artistic production between 1910 and the outbreak of the Second World War. Beyond this point consensus often breaks down. Division frequently occurs along national lines with obvious disparities between the generalizing usage of English-language observers and the more particular emphasis of continental Europeans. Modernism is seen, for example, to comprehend or else be comprehended by "avant-



gardism," "modernity," "the modern movement," and even "decadence." Elsewhere it is differentiated from or rejected in favor of any of these other terms, none of them less elusive, protean, and complicated. In addition, "Modernism" evokes a range of judgments usually dependent upon ideology. Hence its championing by bourgeois critics, its rejection by Central and East European Communists as well as leftist British and U.S. Social Realists, its condemnation by dogmatists of the Stalin-Zhdanov persuasion, and its qualified advocacy by conciliatory Marxists. Within some circles the debate over Modernism has been going on for approximately fifty years, its eventual outcome doubtless to be determined by a clear distinction between Modernism as means and Modernism as end.<sup>61</sup>

The existence of such diverse associations requires that the term's usage here be specified with some precision. Our specification recognizes claims submitted by those among whom there is as much disagreement in general emphasis and outlook as there is accord in their choice of literary particulars. But in doing so, it offers less a reconciliation than an advancement of what must necessarily be considered as the ongoing discussion that attempts to seize upon the nature of Modernism.<sup>62</sup> So far reference has been made to commonly acknowledged chronological and geographical boundaries. Discussion has also noted certain distinguishing features for the major thrust of art which, while rooted in the nineteenth century, gained impetus in the years preceding the First World War and achieved both its qualitative and its quantitative culmination during the 1920s. More significant than such surface details, however, is their common source



of origin. Shared symptoms reflect and translate a fundamental condition in all cases. It is to this that the term "Modernism" also refers.

Beneath diverse exteriors is that consciousness of change in the relationship between man and milieu marked by an increasingly fragmented apprehension of objective reality and the growing alienation of the artist from his society. Heightened by the consequences of industrial growth and the historical experience of post-Revolutionary Europe, the new awareness is already present in the work of nineteenth-century Romanticists and non-Romanticists alike. Yet such a comprehension ceases to be offset by Romanticism's dominant and successfully realized impulse toward integrating vision or by containment within traditional poetic forms and structures. The sense of dislocation is intellectually aggravated by the advancement of new views of man, now the product of an evolutionary process or of his inner drives. Once the new century is under way, the popularization of new subjective developments in psychology, physics, and mathematics intensifies the diffusion of focus.

The breakdown begins to display itself artistically within the last decades of the nineteenth century. In late Impressionism a reduction of phenomena to their light and color components is accompanied by a new dominance of the mode of perception over the thing perceived; in Naturalism the all-inclusive rendering of detail tends to obscure and even prohibit any order or priority in selection. As is often noted, such traits evolve further within the twentieth century. There the increasingly fragmented outlook and associated





social and intellectual displacement receive their major aesthetic translation.

Full-blown Modernism differs from its preliminary phases in the intensity of its drive toward "realization," Stephen Spender's designation for "the determination to invent a new style in order to express the deeply felt change in the modern world."<sup>63</sup> Regardless of whether this pervasive determination to create a particularized form and idiom is realized by those to whom Spender limits his remarks (Joyce, Eliot, Pound) or by their many peers for whom "realization" is less exclusively aesthetic, every example of Modernism inherently and overwhelmingly rejects conventional modes of objective realism. Often, but not always, the rejection involves the pre-eminence of the inner as opposed to the outer world. In each case, however, there is a denial of that unified world view which informed traditional Realism and which is now held wholly inappropriate to the times. It is here that the dilemma which resides at the core of Modernism most clearly reveals itself. In literature artistic accommodations to perceptibly felt changes in the world are expressed dramatically and diversely. The new dichotomy between antagonistic form-creating and form-destroying tendencies evident in the visual arts (for example, Cubism and Constructivism on the one hand, Expressionism and Surrealism on the other)<sup>64</sup> has parallels within Futurist, Expressionist, and Surrealist poetry. Within drama and the novel, there is a coexistence of the two tendencies which constantly imposes itself on the consciousness of the reader and spectator. Concomitant with this preoccupation with form, which enabled Modernism in certain cases to evolve into pure



formalism, is that less easily resolved problem of Erlebnisbild responsible for the formal revolution. In this area accommodations proved far more problematic and sometimes even disastrous.

Solutions to the more difficult problem differ in degree and kind. In a number of instances they are stimulated by the unavoidable confrontation with contemporary history, despite the predilection of many Modernists to do otherwise. The responses incline either toward an isolated and aesthetic non serviam or social and ideological re-integration. These opposing tendencies are perhaps best described in terms of the Mallarmé-Apollinaire dichotomy which Miklós Szabolcsi applies to more recent developments in art and literature. Here, however, it is important to differentiate between our use of the juxtaposition and Szabolcsi's original one. Szabolcsi perceives Mallarmé, "the great precursor of the cult of the isolated Ego, of the transformation of literature into linguistic symbols," and "of the hermetic wordplay of our days" as diametrically opposed to Apollinaire. The latter, "with his openness, his deep interest in man and in the people, his cheerfulness and irony and humanism is at the source of a powerful current in European poetry, open, impulsive, reconciling man with society" (p. 51). Rightly contending that the generalizing sense of Modernism by most Anglophone and some Francophone scholars for every trend sharply contrasting with nineteenth-century Romanticism and Realism eradicates the underlying differences between the tendencies for which it stands, Szabolcsi prefers the use of "avant-garde." For him it designates the reconciliatory, humanistic strain and subsumes twentieth-century trends and tendencies marked by distinct aesthetic,



philosophical, and often political programs (pp. 50-51).

As sensible as these suggestions appear to be, and as obviously conciliatory as they are on the subject of much bourgeois art condemned by Stalinist critics, they are not without difficulties. Such avant-garde programs as Italian Futurism, for example, ultimately emerged as non-reconciliatory and non-humanist, a development only acknowledged by Szabolcsi's allowances for change and flexibility. The apparent mutual exclusiveness of the two dominant strains is suspended in that "inter-region" to which Szabolcsi assigns those various late symbolist and neoclassical trends and oeuvres (the work of Rilke, Pound, Yeats, Valéry, Proust) carried over into the twentieth century and sometimes linked with the "avant-garde." A schematization such as the one proposed, however, does not appear to admit that simultaneous presence of the two contradictory tendencies or their permutations. It, in fact, describes the prevalent condition of non-conservative, non-aristocratic bourgeois art, particularly during the interwar period. Since this coexistence cannot be denied, it seems preferable, for purposes of the present study, to differentiate between the tendencies within the Modernist instead of the avant-garde designation.<sup>65</sup>

Very visible evidence of the co-existence and permutations is furnished by the assorted solutions to Modernism's social-ideological dilemma. It is variously demonstrated in the embrace of retrograde traditions and new forms of authoritarianism (religion, Fascism, Stalinism), an artistic commitment to social activism and criticism (Socialism, Socialist Realism, engagement), and the distinct combination of social analysis with praxis (Marxism). At the point where these





solutions occur, the alignment with Modernism frequently ceases. In its place a new classicism, as with Eliot, is occasionally substituted. Elsewhere Modernism is superseded by Social Realism and Proletarian Literature, both of which prescribe content and the mode of presentation. For others, such as Brecht, Eluard, and Aragon, who recognize a degree of legitimacy in the formal revolution and its expansion of realism, Modernism ceases to be a condition and is transmuted exclusively as technical means in the service of entirely new ends. Thus "Modernism" embraces both the self-conscious creation of appropriate form--that is, form appropriate to the expression of perceptibly changed subject matter --and an as yet non-integrating apprehension of reality. Broadly conceived, "Modernism" encompasses its imminent mutations and rejections along with examples of its pure strain. Therefore Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz are equally Modernism's manifestations.

Through its reflection of almost every specific feature of Modernism, Ulysses probably represents its prose epitome.<sup>66</sup> The same claim can be made for neither the American nor the German novel. They are perhaps best viewed as problematic attempts to escape the Modernist condition. But these works which typify shared and simultaneously alternate solutions to a common dilemma in bourgeois art are no less representative of Modernism. Their typical quality is further illuminated by their relationship with that part of Dos Passos' and Döblin's work which seeks similar ends. To what extent the routes undertaken by Dos Passos and Döblin converge becomes abundantly clear from the evidence of their critical and creative production and from their priorities for art and for the novel.



### CHAPTER III

#### EN ROUTE TO ALEXANDERPLATZ AND MANHATTAN

##### Preliminary Considerations

The favorable response Ulysses elicited from Dos Passos and Döblin is a predictable phenomenon in light of the activities and concerns which precede and coincide with their encounters with Joyce's work. By the time of their respective readings in 1922 and 1927-28, the twenty-six-year-old American and the forty-nine-year-old German had shown themselves to be highly critical of the state of literature and of the arts in their own countries. Receptive to diverse efforts to counteract the stagnant condition, both advocated far-reaching artistic accommodations to a reality each considered drastically different from the one portrayed in much contemporary German and American writing. It was a reality, moreover, whose essential nature both sought to interpret outside of as well as within their fiction. More than anything else, Ulysses corroborated their artistic aims. But their own novels which share demonstrable affinities with Ulysses are as much its alternatives as they are its analogies. They are, in fact, engendered by an artistic orientation that is antithetical to the stance Joyce adopted vis-à-vis society and contemporary history.

Embracing more than novelistic fiction and far more than imaginative literature, the pre-Alexanderplatz, pre-Manhattan Transfer



production reveals multiple and interrelated attempts to confront the dual problem of appropriate form and world-view which resides at the core of Modernism. What particularly distinguishes Döblin and Dos Passos is the pursuit of imaginative literature in conjunction with numerous non-fiction expressions of ideological accommodation to a world now perceived as new and different. Thus the crisis of values recognized as inherent in Modernism by all commentators, both those who invoke the term "Modernism" "evangelically or pejoratively"<sup>1</sup> and those less partisan in orientation, underlies much of Dos Passos' and Döblin's diverse oeuvre in the period concerning us here. Necessarily then, a grasp of the preconditions of Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer includes a view of informing spirit and aesthetic consequences alike.





## The Inadequacies of Tradition-bound and Tradition-free Literature

Literature was an enterprise toward which both Döblin and Dos Passos displayed a certain degree of ambivalence at the point of embarkation. Such reactions were no doubt produced by Döblin's initially ambiguous regard for the vocational respectability of writing and by Dos Passos' double inclination toward painting and architecture. Ambivalence also derived from their mutual reluctance to be either economically bound to or artistically compromised by the whims of editors and publishers.<sup>2</sup> Although not approached with the exclusiveness of a total occupational dedication, literature was still conceived as an undertaking serious enough to merit a substantial amount of critical and creative activity. Their combined production of creative and critical writing is a response to the dominant aspect of contemporary German and American literature, such as each understood it. At the same time, their work is an expression of deep dissatisfaction with art separated from the nature and fabric of modern life and divorced from the concomitant alterations imposed by that life's apprehension. Döblin and Dos Passos prescribed necessary relief while recognizing the distinctive national character of those external conditions which had important implications for art. In much the same way, they diagnosed symptoms and root causes.

Following the publication of Alexanderplatz, Döblin described the situation of German writing at the turn of the century as that of standstill, in which "der versandende Naturalismus, die drohende Reaktion, die ausgeholte Klassik" prevailed.<sup>3</sup> A later assessment of



the "Stand der deutschen Literatur vor 1933" in prefatory remarks for his 1938 survey Die deutsche Literatur (im Ausland seit 1933) saw the pre-World War I years marked by the division of writers into three major groups. They emerged as: (1) Feudalists of agrarian and patrician inclinations whose subject matter was drawn from national history, frequently of the medieval period, and whose prose styles were inspired by Goethe's late writing, Kleist's Novellen, and the Austrian Stifter's work; (2) Humanists of conciliatory bourgeois progressive tendencies who advocated the humanistic ideal developed under German Classicism, valued a continuation of the unique German tradition of Bildung, and who, with much of German Bürgertum behind them, served as custodians of the German cultural heritage; (3) a heterogeneous aggregate of Geistesrevolutionäre which variously manifested forward-looking affirmations of technology, industry, economic and political development, immersion in some aspect of political or class struggle, and was united by "ein anderes, ein neues Weltgefühl" from that of the Feudalists and Humanists. Döblin's revolutionaries were distinguished by certain retrograde predilections for anarchism, mysticism, and irrationalism which ultimately brought some of their members into a post-1933 alignment with the Feudalists; in other areas they remained in close proximity to the Humanists. They nevertheless presented a radically different orientation from the other two groups. The chief features of these Geistesrevolutionäre were their original and positive attitude toward the present reality and their denial of that veneration of the past shared by the Feudalists and Humanists. Whether this denial displayed itself as an outright rejection or a qualified acceptance of





the cultural heritage, it commonly originated in a pervasive skepticism toward this heritage as promulgated by the tradition of transmitted Bildung with its preservation of the hegemony of the Bürgertum's values and way of life.<sup>4</sup> This skepticism necessarily separated the group's artistic efforts and interests from the realms of both petit bourgeois and cultivated Bürger (DL, pp. 5-9).

Döblin's survey of the artistic situation in evidence by 1912 seizes upon that major affliction of German writing to which he responded for nearly three decades. What he considered a characteristically German preoccupation with the past exerted a stranglehold on culture. It prohibited the realization of the formal and material implications of a world very different from that of either agrarian and patrician or Bürger past. During that postwar, postrevolutionary decade from which Alexanderplatz developed, Döblin's artistic critique merged with a broad cultural and social one. It included, among other things, the collaborative preparation with Heinrich Mann of a school history text planned as a corrective for the continued concentration, even under the Republic, upon medieval and Imperial history, folklore, and Heimatliebe. To these Döblin credited not merely neglect of the new world but the inculcation of its outright rejection among German youth. Döblin proved a frequent opponent of this particular form of ancestor worship. He was therefore a critic of that social stratum responsible for its perpetuation, those resistant, conservative elements he saw filling the ranks of government, education, and publishing, and patronizing the theatres, concerts, museums, and galleries. Yet this opposition, even during the period of Döblin's greatest politicization in the early 1920s,





involved neither the advocacy of class struggle nor the rejection of the cultural heritage per se. Admitting a certain alienation from the "Classical ensemble" so inextricably linked up with Bürgertum, he became sufficiently attracted to Goethe's intellect and spirit to write about both. He also remained steadfast in his admiration for Hölderlin's work. What Döblin censured was that obsession with the past which discouraged the creation of truly new art and that fixation with monuments which erected new artistic deities with little sense of a new age.<sup>5</sup>

The effects of the double infirmity were felt in every artistic sphere. Its most immediate influence was seen in the performing arts Döblin reviewed in the prewar years for Das Theater and Der Sturm and in the postwar period for a variety of liberal organs, including Die Neue Rundschau and the Prager Tagblatt. As the pseudonymous prewar "Trust," for example, Döblin pointedly cited Grillparzer's work as the kind of "modern" play pedagogues deemed valuable for performance in the upper level schools of Berlin and its suburbs. By the 1920s, which witnessed the flowering of German theatre activity centered in Berlin, he scored that combination of totemism, commercialism, and complacency responsible for the constant exploitation of older authors and simultaneous resistance to the provocative theatre of new and younger playwrights like Brecht and Bronnen. German theatre repertory of the period afforded a prominent display of the penchant for monuments and the raising up of myths. Döblin characterized the tendency thusly for De Hollandsche Revue: "De Duitschers moeten nu eenmal hun mythen hebben en als ze geen mythische figuren kunnen vinden, dan ontwikkelen zij die



in hun eigen gedachten. De mythos der wetenschap is Einstein, de mythos der techniek Oskar von Miller en de mythos der literatuur Hauptmann."

Such an analysis of the Hauptmann phenomenon is significant. In Döblin's opinion Hauptmann's wide acclaim ultimately reflected the general retrograde disposition of the Weimar Republic.<sup>6</sup>

Döblin's Hauptmann reception developed over a decade. Beginning with his Sturm review of a 1912 performance of Gabriel Schillings Flucht, he revealed himself aesthetically unimpressed by the work of the writer who was to acquire both the reputation of Germany's foremost living author and the Nobel prize in the late 1920s. Döblin's analysis of the Hauptmann cult for De Hollandsche Revue acknowledged the writer's sensitivity, congeniality, poetic talents, and that forceful personality expressed in his work. The refined Kunstkünstler, however, was no Goethe-like world genius, had exerted no influence upon either German or foreign literature, and, most important, was out of touch with the times. The last feature was one reiterated by Döblin in a number of his Prager Tagblatt notices. Within the realm of drama Hauptmann had long since ceased creating anything of Die Weber's stageworthy caliber. From the writer who had first appeared at the Naturalistic movement's liberating inception, he had evolved into quite a different artist. This was only too apparent from his numerous undramatic, unchallenging works in outmoded language. Lacking in depth, they were also marred by incomplete conceptions. Despite his celebrity, longevity, productivity, and the occasional redemption of his weak plays by good performances, Hauptmann had not had the slightest influence on living literature for a long time. What is more, he drew no stimulus from it for his own





work. His entire relationship with the period in which he lived, in fact, was a purely external one. Consequently, Döblin, who several times announced his non-participation in the 1922 Hauptmann-Jubilee honoring the writer's sixtieth birthday, declined the critic-dramatist Felix Hollaender's invitation to contribute to a commemorative Hauptmann Festschrift. He was unable, Döblin explained, to provide the required acknowledgment of indebtedness to Hauptmann: "ich rede nicht davon wie absurd, burlesk, völlig unbegreiflich es wäre, wenn ich mich plötzlich zu Hauptmann bekennte, ich, einer Generation und Seelenschicht angehörig, die in Fremdheit und fast in Widerspruch zu Hauptmännischem sich hochdrängt."<sup>7</sup>

As interpreted by Döblin, this kind of inflated stature for an artist enjoying a purely external relationship with his period was hardly confined to the domaine of theatre. A parallel and even more aggravated situation was evident in music. There Döblin also saw a monopoly on performance repertory by the old masters and witnessed the devastation wrought by commercialism, audience apathy, and professional critics writing under the pressures of deadlines and finance. He even found a counterpart for the Hauptmann phenomenon in the success of Richard Strauss. Döblin himself preferred to describe the polished, talented eclectic as a musical Sudermann. But the wave of popularity enjoyed by Hermann Sudermann's plays, with their superficial social criticism and shallow dialogue, had already crested. Therefore Döblin could review a 1910 production of Strandkinder for Das Theater with enough equanimity to mix metaphors and term its author a somewhat skillful carpenter and a single case of a non-contagious disease. Strauss,





however, was at the height of his career. Hence Döblin described the most successful of all Strauss's operas, Der Rosenkavalier, as a pestilence in need of appropriate hygienic remedies. Much later in life Döblin displayed more enthusiasm for Strauss and for some of the very works he condemned decades earlier. Despite this volte-face, the commentary of the years immediately before and after the First World War corresponds entirely to Döblin's general artistic orientation of his pre-exile period. Strauss's penchant for lyrical, romantic expression produced music that was dated; his work relied upon cheap emotional effects and sensationalism; his musical composition, such as it existed, consisted of arrangement and decoration instead of new formations. The composer's reputation, as Döblin remarked apropos of Der Rosenkavalier, was largely the creation of the press whose members now fulfilled the function of priests of old appointed by the people to reveal the deity in public.<sup>8</sup>

What was conducive to elevating Strauss to a public god was likewise responsible for antagonism toward Schönberg and Bartok, both of whom found an admirer in Döblin. Linke Poot attributed the German resistance to modern music to the prevalence of a distinctive musical taste. In a country "wo der historische Ohrenschmalz dicke Pfröpfe bildet," preference was given to Strauss's Makartstücke. This accounted for the delayed performance of Bartok's work, that of a consummate musician, until after the war. For the ridicule to which the more literary Austrian's pioneering work had been subjected by Berlin critics in 1912, Döblin held musical ignorance at fault. It was, he maintained in Der Sturm, clearly demonstrated by the critics' failure to recognize



Schönberg's theoretical unassailability and unmistakable artistic talent. The reviewers labored under the misconception which held indispensable to music those features (for example, melody, harmony, motif) which were only formal manifestations of a particular European development. Döblin's defense of Schönberg, in whose work he saw new music's most characteristic features, compared the Austrian's compositions to the Futurists' paintings. They too offered a new direction, a clearing of the air. In this sense Schönberg's work was a musical analogue for those canvasses of Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, and Severini which Döblin had deemed a necessary antithesis to German painting's exclusive and sterile concentration on traditional painterly principles and formal relationships.<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, Döblin's receptivity to various manifestations of prewar experimentation in the arts reflects the prevailing attitudes of the Berlin iconoclasts who congregated early in the century at the Café des Westens and Dalbelli's, some of whom soon formed the nucleus of the Sturm circle. Yet it would be an oversimplification to identify Döblin's aesthetic orientation exclusively in terms of these affiliations. He shared the general antipathy toward the current idols of the bourgeoisie and had enthusiasm for the diverse forms of artistic innovation taking hold in poetry, prose, painting, graphics, and music. He did so, however, from a vantage point slightly different from that of a group which ultimately advanced the programs of Herwarth Walden's Wortkunst and Lothar Schreyer's Lautkunst, poetic counterparts to non-objective painting based on the association of word sounds and rhythms.<sup>10</sup> As this variant of Abstract Expressionism evolved between 1913 and the





end of the decade, its extreme assertion of an autonomous literary art proved antithetical to Döblin's emphasis on the necessary distinctions between the word's meaning and idea-bound character and the relative freedom of the basic color and sound components of painting and music.<sup>11</sup> The fact that neither Döblin's good friend Walden nor "ein anderer aus dem Kreis der Orthodoxen" chose to comment on the 1915 novel Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun is important. It signals their tacit, if disapproving, recognition of the independence of Döblin's thought and practice. Of this parting of the ways Döblin further noted in his 1948 "Epilog": "Ich ging andere Wege. Ich verstand die drüben gut, sie mich nicht" (AzL, p. 386).

Despite his disagreement with the extreme solutions of the Sturm program, Döblin's own route was pursued with far fewer misgivings about such new and ineffective remedies than with the persistence of old weaknesses in German literature. To a great extent the backward-looking character of much contemporary writing was related to a traditional isolation from both the social and purely human realms. This isolated aspect of German literature frequently demonstrated itself in a tendency toward morbidity and pronounced erudition. Both traits received some attention in a 1926 travel account of a trip to France. A quality of decay, a propensity for brooding, Döblin asserted, had set in long before Hebbel. These were specifically translated in the association of passion and sexuality with death and in a concentration on the gruesome. Behind this fixation he observed that same asceticism and flight from reality associated with the learned quality unique to German literature. Its effects were directly connected with the popularity of kitsch authors,





writers who, in contrast to their more reputable confreres, acknowledged the existence of simple, natural, human feeling. Döblin eventually viewed his national literature as the product of weak social beings whose work was isolated from the social organism itself.

Compared to the German variety, French literature appeared as the product of that cultivated people who were makers of revolutions and endowed with a more highly developed sense of freedom than the Germans. Unlike the Scandinavian and the Russian, French literature exerted little formative influence upon that portion of Döblin's work under consideration here; his appreciation of its dominant character, however, is indicative of the importance he attached to the full re-integration of German writing in the life, meaning, and spirit of the times.<sup>12</sup>

Of all the genres the German novel offered Döblin the most flagrant example of isolation and non-integration. He recognized that the German novel had evolved very differently from its Romance language counterparts. With the possible exception of Freytag's Soll und Haben (1855), it was not even a novel in the French sense. While he came to understand that French novels, such as those of Balzac, possessed a lively, bold spirit, precise and exact expression, and, above all, an elemental bond with human beings and society--qualities he deemed much needed in German writing--Döblin never advocated Gallic-style pursuits for his compatriots.<sup>13</sup> The issue which concerned him instead was that of a particular correlation between literary and social attitudes. Failing to note that specific changes outside the novel had drastically affected the picture of man and the world, ignoring the necessary



relationship between these changes and the novel's form and substance, German novelists continued to create wholly inappropriate works. In the aforementioned Ulysses review Döblin made special mention of their nineteenth-century aphoristic nature. It reflected the German genre's generally retrograde character, an aspect which emerges as the dominant theme in Döblin's novel criticism. If his earliest writing on the subject, the "Berliner Programm" addressed "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker," sounds an opposition to eroticism, suspense, and psychologism, features writers mistakenly identified with the genre itself, the 1913 Sturm piece also asserts that "Die Welt ist in die Tiefe und Breite gewachsen" (AzL, p. 15). The formal and stylistic changes Döblin was to advocate were essentially based upon his interpretations of the nature of growth in these directions. Consequently, his reiterated challenges to that hegemony of the author which time and again manifested itself in the German novel's frequent authorial intrusions were inspired by a double recognition: such dominance reflected an outmoded mentality and outlook and was inimical to art.

A particular development of the German genre's subjectivism, which Döblin in 1917 termed the "feuilletonistische Degeneration" of the novel, was seen as the imposition upon the reader of reflections, observations, and essays not strong enough for independent existence outside the novel. Their presence masked weaknesses in construction and the inability to set forth the fictional constituents. Beginning with Goethe's Wilhelm Meister and Die Wahlverwandtschaften, the tendency was apparent in the work of such twentieth-century representatives of the "subjective Epopöe" and Bürgertum as Thomas Mann (B, p. 361).





Approximately twenty years earlier, in an unpublished questionnaire response, Döblin remarked that the real crisis of the novel was revealed in recent extreme examples of the mixed mode. Their authors had correctly rejected some of the old ways of novel-writing. Instead of an artistic genre, however, they offered a series of essays in loose form with varying proportions of story and plot, vehicles for their specialized ideas and impressions which were lengthy intellectualizing works reflecting a "world picture." The end product was "ein charmantes Zwischengebiet zwischen Philosophie und Romanerwägungen. Formal erscheint es bald wie Plauderei, bald wie Feuilletonistik, Essayistik. Ist im Ganzen eine Schriftstellerei, die zeigt, womit die Herren und ihre Zeit sich herumschlagen, bringt hübsche Gedanken und ist schon soviel wert als manches Philosophiebuch, das sich auf seine Trockenheit etwas einbildet."<sup>14</sup>

Here Döblin voiced his dissatisfaction in primarily formal terms. Elsewhere he viewed the nature of novelistic subject matter with equal discontent. His skimming of an unspecified novel by an unnamed living author led him to observe, for example, that the genre with subjective emphasis on an individual's life was hopelessly out-of-date. Man, he exclaimed in 1923, was no longer Faustian. In Döblin's opinion, literature which failed to reflect the changes outside it was not to be taken seriously: "Die sprechende Kunst oder Wortkunst ohne den Horizont der neuen Welt, ohne den Impetus dieser Zeit, ohne Schärfe, Härte, Geistigkeit ist Spielerei."<sup>15</sup>

Döblin's serious reservations about the tradition-bound, backward-looking, and socially isolated character of German writing have striking





parallels in Dos Passos' diagnosis of the condition of American literature. The American's assessment proved to be no less unsparing in its attention to fundamental weaknesses and impediments to the kind of literary development he considered necessary and vital. Moreover, like Döblin, Dos Passos saw the problems in American writing not as self-enclosed aesthetic phenomena but as those intimately bound up with the rest of the nation's cultural and social fabric.

If Döblin considered German literature weakened by its unique and excessive dependence upon tradition, and therefore inappropriately derivative and imitative, American literature appeared no less derivative and imitative to the young Dos Passos. A literature suffering from a lack rather than an excess of tradition, however, was bound by fetters forged abroad. Addressing himself to this problem in the 1916 New Republic contribution "Against American Literature," his first essay to appear outside the Harvard Monthly, Dos Passos offered a generalized critique of what he designated the entire "wholesome rice pudding affair."<sup>16</sup> In its present state American literature revealed the domination of foreign-inspired writing, a condition directly linked with the rootlessness imparted by the particular development of the nation and its culture. It had no prehistory in the sense of that age-old dependence on the past characteristic of other literatures, a dependence which had evolved from ancient folklore and an equally ancient intimacy with nature. American writing also displayed a tendency toward abstractness. This Dos Passos traced back to American Protestantism, which had divested the deity of tangible and concrete attributes. The result was a derivative literature of foreign imitations with little



national character, save a consistently "American" feature in its satiric bent, whether "vague and kindly" (p. 269) or "bitter." Even at its best, as in those novels of Edith Wharton and Robert Herrick distinguished by their "sincere, careful, and . . . shrewd observation of contemporary life," American literature lacked the dramatic actuality, the color, the depth of thought and feeling apparent in other literatures. The end product was one in which the tone was "that of a well brought up and intelligent woman, tolerant, versed in the things of this world, quietly humorous, but bound tightly in the fetters of 'niceness,' of the middle-class outlook. And when the shackles are thrown off, the rest is vulgarity, and what is worse, affectation" (pp. 270-271). Whitman, who had "abandoned the vague genteelness that had characterized American writing, the stiff product of the leisure hours of a petite noblesse de province" (p. 270), had asserted a dependence on the future. In doing so, he had offered the only conceivable substitute for that dependence on the past made impossible by the nation's unique development. The support of antiquity, Dos Passos emphatically observed, was now all the more impossible since industrialism had severed the present from the past.

The weaknesses of American writing were underscored for Dos Passos by his contact with recent Spanish literature and with some of its leading representatives between the fall of 1916 and early 1917. The novels of Pío Baroja, as viewed through his Madrid trilogy La lucha por la vida, and the poetry of Antonio Machado and of the Catalan Joan Maragall demonstrated an intense sense of reality and life, a human vividness, a tart simplicity, acidity, and freshness of language which





made noteworthy American writers pale by comparison. As a result, the articles, essays, and book reviews of 1917 through the early 1920s which deal with Spanish literature, a number of them to reappear in the 1922 portrait of Spain, Rosinante to the Road Again, refer to the "stale conquests of form we inherited from Poe and O. Henry," "the somewhat sickly plants of our own culture," and related traces of obvious malady. By 1917, in the essay "Young Spain," Dos Passos was categorizing Henry James as the creator of "pale artifices."<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that three years earlier at Harvard he had admired the American writer, irrespective of his lack of vividness, power, and deep emotion, for his "careful and delicate characterization," his "fine miniature portraiture," his "exquisite and subtle satire" (14C, pp. 21-23). Yet the recent literature of Spain, as exemplified by the Generation of '98, displayed far more than mere stylistic strength. It revealed a national consciousness, an intimate connection with its people, and the meaning of that modern life its writers captured, interpreted, and criticized. Spanish writing, in fact, presented a specific variant of that general inclination toward humanity and the world which Döblin termed "Latinität" with respect to the novels of Balzac and Proust (AzL, p. 370). Dos Passos' approval of this integration of literature in the life and spirit of the time did not endorse or imply imitation. Instead it apprehended Spanish literature as an object lesson for American writing which was presently dominated by "vague grand ideas" (RRA, p. 131) and by facile, prolific writers and novelists who made no "attempt to feel and express directly the life about them and in them."<sup>18</sup>

The effects of this condition were pervasive in the arts. For





Dos Passos they were only too clearly evident in American theatre, in which he had a particular interest even before his post-Manhattan Transfer involvement with the New Playwrights. Like Döblin, Dos Passos proved sharply critical of the rampant commercialism and the audience attitudes influencing theatre repertory. He also reserved his most pointed remarks for the purely external relationship most of its contributors had with the period. In 1923, for example, he charged, "The New York theater today has no more to do with the daily existence of the average New Yorker . . . than it has with the pigtail of the living God at Lhasa. The burlesque shows and even the movies are much closer,"<sup>19</sup> a statement with strong implications for his own theatrical efforts that is equally reflective of the stance he had adopted vis-à-vis non-dramatic writing.

With only a few exceptions, contemporary writers and novelists, in particular, had still not "cleared the shoals," as asserted in a 1922 review of Cummings' Enormous Room. They had yet to tackle subject matter with profound implications for the manner and mode of writing, yet "to fuse the soggy disjointed complexity of the industrial life about us into seething fluid of creation" (pp. 98-99). For Dos Passos the unwillingness to embark on the voyage was construed as the frequent reluctance to jeopardize financial and popular success. In its own way this root cause was no less troublesome than the ones lamented by Döblin, since, as Dos Passos had maintained, "There has never been great art that did not beat with every beat of the life around it" (14C, p. 280). This pronouncement in a letter of February 17, 1920 was, in fact, a rejection of aestheticism and was voiced in commentary to



Dial editor Stewart Mitchell about his magazine's January 1920 issue. The number was pervaded by a "faint British perfume" (Idem.) and was generally unrepresentative of the tendencies in American literature Dos Passos had hoped to see exhibited in the Dial. In its present form the magazine displayed an "art for art" orientation with little recognition of the life around it now dramatically imposing itself on the senses and consciousness. It was this imposition which was ultimately to effect artistic innovation for Dos Passos.

As he was receptive to change and experimentation, Dos Passos was equally cognizant of widespread resistance to it, that "peevish howl of pain and surprise" which arose "when any one commits anything novel in the arts." But "novelty" was never an end in itself. Moreover, the sense in which Dos Passos employed the term in his "Off the Shoals" review was closely akin to the usage of "modern" by Döblin. Writing as "Trust" in 1909 on the general response to the work of the "modern" artist, that is, the one who experiences the soul of his time and traces out its rhythm, Döblin had explained, "In ihrem Erstaunen über ihr Aussehen nennen sie den Wahren bizarr, und hypermodern, wenn Ahnungen der Wahrheit sie unsicher machen. Aber die unbedenkliche Million deckt ihren Abscheu vor der Wahrheit zu, indem sie den Modernen für verrückt erklärt. Sie alle glühen für die Kunst von vorgestern und halten den für wertvoll, der Anerkanntes und Bekanntes am deutlichsten gruppiert." Dos Passos' enthusiasm for artistic innovation dated back to his last years at Harvard (1914-16). There, through Edward Nagel, the sculptor Gaston Lachaise's stepson, Dos Passos was introduced to what he retrospectively called "the world of 'the modern'" and "the excitements and





the experiments of the school of Paris": French editions of the Russian novelists, D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, copies of BLAST, Eliot's early poems. After such initial exposure, "Diaghilev's Ballet and the novelties at the Boston operas and the Armory Show did the rest" (BT, p. 35). Once whetted, Dos Passos' appetite was further stimulated through the war and the 1920s by direct and indirect contact with the works of Stravinsky, Picasso, Juan Gris, Cocteau, Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Meyerhold, Piscator, and the Mexican muralists during his frequent forays abroad. Later in life, at least from the evidence of The Theme is Freedom (1956), he explained these "new methods of expression" as "a last blooming" of the nineteenth century's artistic revolts. An earlier assessment prefacing his published translations of Blaise Cendrars's poetry (1931), however, was somewhat more effusive about "the creative tidal wave that spread over the world from the Paris of before the last European war." Here he observed:

Under various tags: futurism, cubism, vorticism, modernism, most of the best work in the arts in our time has been the direct product of this explosion, that had an influence in its sphere comparable with that of the October revolution in social organization and politics and the Einstein formula in physics. Cendrars and Apollinaire, poets, were on the first cubist barricades with the group that included Picasso, Modigliani, Marinetti, Chagall; that profoundly influenced Maiakovsky, Meyerhold, Eisenstein; whose ideas carom through Joyce, Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot (first published in Wyndham Lewis's [sic] "Blast"). The music of Stravinski and Prokofieff and Diageleff's Ballet hail from this same Paris already in the disintegration of victory, as do the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue, skyscraper furniture, the Lenin Memorial in Moscow, the paintings of Diego Rivera in Mexico City and the newritz styles of advertizing in American magazines.<sup>20</sup>

Dos Passos' rapid-fire summation describes that kind of art whose modes of expression did correspond to the life around it. In the poetry





of Cendrars, an antedote for both the post-Imagistic lapse of American poetry into "parlor entertainment for highschool English classes" and its creators' absorption in "Library philosophies vaguely favorable to fascism, pederasty and the snobmysticism of dying religion," this same preface (p. viii) praised a very particular example of art which "beat with every beat of the life around it." It was, as also described in a 1926 Saturday Review piece, that music and human rhythm created from the raw material of an "age of giant machines and scuttleheaded men."<sup>21</sup> Here Dos Passos comes much closer to Döblin than to some of the named participants in his tidal wave. (That movement, of course, engulfed Döblin by virtue of the "Döblinismus" displayed in his Sturm pieces. It had most certainly been admired by both Apollinaire and Delaunay. It most likely drew the approval of Marinetti as well, since he and Döblin had heartily agreed on the need for unadorned, directly expressive writing during their 1912 meeting in Berlin.) While Döblin subscribed to the widespread formal revolution in the various arts, he came to view some of its literary manifestations less than enthusiastically. To the aforementioned rejection of Wortkunst-Lautkunst can be added a negative response to Marinetti's poetic program for extreme syntactical condensation. Apparently reacting more to the sample of Futurist literature attached to the manifesto, the Supplément, Bataille Poids + Odeur, than to the manifesto itself, Döblin perceived in it little originality and scant unity of figurative language. The Italian's proposals produced only fragmentation and abstraction, let alone the continued poetic exaltation of such "gänzlich alte Dinge wie den Mond, Kanarienvögel und Nachtigallen" (AzL, p. 79) in the new liberated



forms.<sup>22</sup> True artistic revolution for Döblin involved the change in subject as well as in form, the final product being one where externals were determined by an inner necessity of the material. For this reason he appreciated Kafka's language in Der Prozess and Das Schloss and opposed the kind of cultivated "style" which called attention to itself.<sup>23</sup> He did so no less, however, than Dos Passos, who rejected the notion of writing "for style" and dismissed stylistic cultivation as "a subtle art to be practiced for its own sake" (14C, p. 181) while struggling with his early war novels in 1918.

Cures for the ailing literatures clearly required more than the application of external relief. In the period from which Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz emerge, they were also to involve more than the presentation of new subject matter in as direct and expressive a manner as possible. They embraced the correctives of interpretation and even judgment. "Jedes Kunstwerk ist Darstellung und Urteil" (DM, p. 83), explained Linke Poot in the February 1920 "Revue" which appeared in Die Neue Rundschau. The statement was made with regard to Theodor Fontane's late nineteenth-century novels. These works, in Döblin's opinion, betrayed no hint that their author saw or understood what was developing outside the comfortable world of the Brandenburg or Berlin gentry and Bürgertum within the metropolis itself. As was to be expected, Fontane washed ashore with his fancifully concocted idyll which was overturned in 1914 and finally destroyed in November 1918 (DM, pp. 82-84). Dos Passos' February 1920 rebuke of his contemporary and friend for the Dial's "l'art pour l'art" stance arose from the understanding that writing involved both the representation and evaluation of that



life which "beat around it." What that life was and the consequences to be drawn from it became as much a non-artistic preoccupation as an aesthetic one for both Dos Passos and Döblin. It assumed a particular urgency through the examples of recent history.





The Centuries Split Apart: New Perspectives  
and the Lessons of Contemporary History

The tremendous impact of 1914-18 and its aftermath upon artistic sensibilities is by now a commonplace acknowledgment. For all that, it is still important to recognize essential distinctions among varied responses to what was not only a period of war waged in unprecedented manner but also one of revolution with equally profound international implications. T. S. Eliot's 1923 description of contemporary history as an "immense panorama of futility and anarchy" which could only be ordered, shaped, and given meaning by myth may be taken as a characteristic Modernist attitude among certain Western writers at the time. But it is not by any means the exclusive one. Nor would it be accurate to interpret as the typical artistic gesture that neutrality adopted by Joyce. This particular denial of contemporary history reveals itself, as Peter Egri notes, in three volumes of published correspondence marked by the absence of any real reflection of the period beyond a negligible number of minor references.<sup>24</sup> Without ignoring the fact that Ulysses, written between 1914-22, is indeed a response to history, it is perhaps best to view Joyce's gesture as an index of the degree of disengagement sought by bourgeois artists during the period. Others assumed a somewhat different position, dissociating themselves from the grimmer aspects of the times without that same disengagement-rejection. For some, like Döblin and Dos Passos, contemporary history heightened their awareness of a changed picture of experience to such an extent that they struggled to interpret its implications in a progressive manner without resolving the fundamental



contradictions in their attitudes.

During the years which generate Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz, it is Döblin who attempts a further-reaching interpretation by going so far as to venture into metaphysical formulations. Because we are concerned here with the representativeness of the routes pursued by the two writers, it is necessary to differentiate between Dos Passos' preliminary definitions and Döblin's hypothetical solutions. Both, however, were stimulated by the European cataclysm and the more hopeful upheavals which began in early 1917. Moreover, as they tried to achieve accommodations in outlook, Dos Passos and Döblin simultaneously sought to provide a rationale for their art. To the extent that the two were preoccupied with the dramatic changes effected by mass industrial society and continuously wrestled with the problem of translating the individual's role within it, their concerns which interest us are undeniably part of an ongoing development. Ultimately, the conversions of the 1940s and 1950s, in the one case to Roman Catholicism, in the other to Jeffersonian democracy and anti-Communism, provided solutions. In spite of their appearance as dramatic turnabouts, these conversions are not out of keeping with the essential nature of the search for appropriate outlook undertaken by either Döblin or Dos Passos.<sup>25</sup> Toward what projected itself as an apparently materialistic age, both maintained a consistently non-materialistic orientation. From 1916-24 and 1917-28, however, they sought to transcend this materialism with the different perspectives engendered by another set of historical particulars.

In an unpublished typescript among his literary remains, an



autobiographical contribution apparently authored sometime between 1929 and 1932, Döblin made an interesting claim. For all its shifts in emphasis and locale, his major work, beginning with the "Chinese novel" Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun (1915) through the latest publication, Alexanderplatz, had the same impetus. It was inspired by observations and conclusions drawn from a life whose collective, industrial, and technological character had precise implications for the individual and society. Such observations and conclusions derived from the "native soil" of all his work and thought. It was, in short, that Berlin of factories, the most horrible blocks of tenements, a prevailing work ethos void of pleasure, a disappearing individual, and the emerging masses.<sup>26</sup> Admittedly, some caution should be exercised with respect to any writer's afterthoughts about earlier work. With Döblin and Dos Passos, both of whom underwent rather important changes in emphasis and subsequently provided explanations of earlier writing colored by more recently acquired religious or political convictions, a circumspect reading of retrospective interpretations is especially advisable.<sup>27</sup> Relatively close in time to the work it describes, however, Döblin's statements--first published in Manfred Beyer's valuable study of the genesis of Alexanderplatz--offer a fairly accurate gauge of the priorities of his pre-exile period. In particular, they reveal what engrossed Döblin in the 1920s, the physiognomy of a new age.

Its specific features and dominant aspect proved no less compelling a subject for Dos Passos. Before leaving Cambridge, he had interpreted both in a kind of companion piece to his 1916 critique of American literature. The interests voiced in "A Humble Protest" are





essentially those which continued to absorb Dos Passos as his thinking and expression gained clarity and precision in the next decade, although in tone and tenor they are more clearly related to Manhattan Transfer than the subsequent trilogy.<sup>28</sup> More important, the essay anticipates that basic contrast between his and Döblin's mode of apprehension which eventually differentiates Manhattan Transfer from Alexanderplatz. Reflecting the broad self-critical tendencies among U.S. intellectuals and artists during the decade, the 1916 "Protest" is far more than the rejection of industrialism by a Harvard aesthete, a category into which Dos Passos never exclusively fit, as even its originator, Malcolm Cowley, conceded.<sup>29</sup> The essay projects a broad overview which recognizes progressive developments in the history of Western civilization and acknowledges both the inevitability and desirability of constant change. It admits, for example, the importance of scientific and technological achievements from the Renaissance onwards and cites such significant consequences for human life as the enormously reduced dependence upon natural phenomena through the increase in positive knowledge. It grants as well the more recent impact of evolutionary and atomic theories on human thought and activity. At the same time, from a general humanistic standpoint Dos Passos advances the desirable presence within change and flux of absolutes, broadly conceived as the effects of ideas and institutions on human potential and the condition of society at large. With the replacement of this criterion by that of scientific and technological progress per se, a perversion and reversal of the progressive development had occurred.

According to Dos Passos, the results of the regression were



evident in the physically and spiritually demoralizing effects of industrialism and its attendant materialism. Through the removal of the human being as the center of focus, the vision of life which emerged was an overwhelmingly negative one. It revealed the destruction "of the capacity of men for living, for the fathoming of life, for the expression of life" (p. 120), the increasing ugliness of human surroundings, and a very obvious form of bondage: "Under industrialism the major part of human kind runs in a vicious circle. Three fourths of the world are bound in economic slavery that the other fourth may in turn be enslaved by the tentacular inessentials of civilization, for the production of which the lower classes have ground out their lives" (p. 119). Obviously, what was needed was a restoration of balance for a picture which now included that reversion to barbarism epitomized by the war raging in Europe. As of 1916 it struck Dos Passos as a conflict initiated by the chief exponent of European industrialism, Germany.

The present tense thrust of Dos Passos' argument, with its correlation between the war and industrialism, is significant. Shortly afterward the impressions of "A Humble Protest" were to be more sharply defined by actual contact with the war. But even from the security of Cambridge, where Dos Passos held ambivalent opinions about Europe's war and American participation in it, he saw the conflict as the most dramatic proof that life and experience had changed. This is clear from the shorter 1915-16 contributions to the Harvard Monthly. In the 1915 "Evangelist and the Volcano," Dos Passos maintained that Americans, viewing the conflagration from abroad, displayed attitudes





indicating that their minds were "so clogged by a long course of the sentimental prejudices and other quack medicines of the nineteenth century that we don't realize we are in the twentieth." Nevertheless, it was a new and different age. The war, as he expressed it in a 1916 "Book Review," had "split the centuries apart."<sup>30</sup>

In a certain sense this realization was more profoundly experienced by Döblin. Unlike Dos Passos, the German did not explicitly characterize the new form of life and experience outside fiction until the postwar period. He had indeed sought to confront it earlier, as he explained in his post-Alexanderplatz typescript explanation: "Ich sah, wie . . . der Einzelne verschwand, wie es . . . nur Tätige und leidende Massen gab: das grosse Kollektivum, eine Volksmasse in einer revolutionären Bewegung zur Abwälzung seiner Not, das war das Thema meines ersten Buches, schon vor dem Krieg. Der Krieg kam, ich war in Lothringen im Seuchenlazarett, ich dachte nach und schrieb in einem andern Buch von den eisernen Kräften des Krieges, und wie es möglich ist, zur Gewaltlosigkeit und zur wirklichen Ordnung zu kommen."<sup>31</sup> The lessons of contemporary history, however, were to provide impetus for a somewhat different approach with significant modifications in perspective from those distinguishing his Wang-lun and his Wallenstein (1916-18/19; published 1920).

Neither Döblin nor Dos Passos participated in active combat during the war. Yet before the armistice was signed, Döblin's service as a Home Guard physician attached to an infantry barracks military hospital in Lorraine and Dos Passos' experiences as a volunteer ambulance driver for Norton Harjes in France and the American Red Cross





in Italy, and as an enlistee in the AEF Medical Corps had convinced them both of the war's senselessness. In addition, they were aware of the startling contradictions between justifications for the enterprise and its day-to-day reality. Before Döblin's discharge, he had experienced the surprising lack of belligerence on the part of ordinary recruits, the petty boredom of military life, firsthand accounts of suffering by German troops, and the steady bombardment of nearby Verdun. He had also treated the wounded and witnessed the physical and emotional havoc wrought by air attacks. Similarly, for all the off-hour luxuries afforded Dos Passos by his "gentleman volunteer" status, he was clearly affected by his ambulance-driving encounters with frontline poilus displaying no apparent hostility toward their German counterparts, trench warfare, gas attacks, mutilated bodies and spirits, and the full display of bureaucracy, indoctrination, and even corruption making up military life in the Allied armies.<sup>32</sup>

Such graphic evidence helped quickly dispel some of the preconceptions and biases held prior to actual contact with the war. Despite the generally anti-imperialist, anti-materialist cast of his Monthly editorials and his ambivalence and indecision during that campaign for American "preparedness" which intensified after the war's outbreak, Dos Passos was not free from the influence of stories circulating about unspeakable Hun atrocities. Moreover, he defended the view promoted by Robert Herrick in The World Decision (1916) that the war was a confrontation between antithetical Latin and Teutonic ideals of European civilization.<sup>33</sup> Döblin went a bit further. In an apparent burst of patriotism, he volunteered for service in either



Belgium or France shortly before his call-up and defended the German shelling of the Red Cross-protected cathedral. The latter display of Prussian nationalism materialized as "Reims," an article for the December 1914 issue of Die Neue Rundschau. It exalted German cultural superiority over the French and English imperialists and drew from Kleist's Hermannsschlacht for references to Teutonic revenge upon Romans of an earlier age. Moreover, it gave credence to current anti-Allied propaganda. The blockading British were depicted as perpetrators of famine upon innocent German children; the French as revenge-seeking exploiters of their Senegalese colonials for a host of "uncivilized" purposes, not the least of these the rape of German women. Döblin was not completely cured of some of these unattractive notions four years later, as is attested by the racial slurs in his "Drei Demokraten," an attack on the democratic façades of Britain and France that was also an offensive against the greedy and loutish "American mammoth." Nevertheless, his attitudes, like those of Dos Passos, underwent significant revisions.<sup>34</sup>

By the summer of 1917, the American had ceased talking of rival ideals and conflicting civilizations. He fixed instead on the discrepancy between domestic U.S. jabbering about atrocities and the actual amount which occurred overseas. He stressed as well the common greed, stubbornness, and sheer stupidity of the Allied and German governments responsible for sustaining the war (14C, p. 98). The connection between the war and the consequences of industrialism and capitalism, however, was one he continued to remark. This is evident from the period's diary entries and correspondence, particularly to his friends Arthur K.





McComb<sup>35</sup> and José Giner Pantoja, both residents of neutral Spain. To "Pepe" Giner, in that 1918 letter intercepted by officials which brought about his eventual dishonorable discharge from the Red Cross for "pro-German sympathies," Dos Passos explained that his prior illusions about the war had crossed the river Styx. As he reiterated the correlation between the war and enslavement to profit and industry, he also remarked on the triumph of plutocracy in an America now fully engaged in the conflict (14C, pp. 150-151). By the next year, Döblin, if critical of the Versailles Treaty's punitive character, was also looking beyond the Allies and allocating an equal share of guilt for a senseless war, little connected with the people who actually fought it, to forces within the German Empire itself. Those culpable parties controlling and supporting the militarists, he claimed in "Die Vertreibung der Gespenster," were to be found not only in government, but in industry and the church as well.<sup>36</sup>

These assessments of that collective experience which jolted even indifferent observers out of their nineteenth-century slumbers were integral to the two writers' increasing social commitment in the postwar years. The war itself influenced a certain prise de conscience on the part of Döblin and Dos Passos, who commonly saw in it the subjugation and manipulation of the population by the ruling classes. No less important for them, however, was that period ushered in by the events of 1917 which brought far more than the war's turning point. Both Döblin and Dos Passos attempted to come to terms with contemporary history beyond the example of destruction provided by the war. This is evident within journalistic writing which is consistently marked by





an articulated social stance even when specific social issues and political topics are not immediate concerns. Through their efforts to define the implications of this other verification of a new reality, the two demonstrate the degree to which they individually sought to order modern and contemporary experience outside their fiction. Equally important, they reveal the extent of their preoccupation with the questions which assumed prominence for all self-conscious Western writers who had not yet turned their backs on the present. Posed by Döblin in the 1920s, the questions were none other than "Wie sollen wir leben, wie sollen wir handeln?"<sup>37</sup> In the case of Döblin and Dos Passos, such preoccupations included the recognition that far-reaching social change, indeed revolution was in order. Neither one, however, managed to proceed beyond this understanding with either an acceptance or successful formulation of a practically realizable program for the transformation they urged. This inability, one which characterized Dos Passos even beyond this period of preliminary definitions through the conclusions of 1926-37, is, of course, shared by numerous other writers of the period. For Döblin and Dos Passos, both of whom sought a rationale for their art outside purely aesthetic boundaries, it was to have repercussions in artistic production.

As he perceived that Germany's real enemy existed "doch mitten im Land" (S, p. 75), within those forces of feudalism dominant in government, church, and industry which perpetuated the population's spiritual and economic enslavement, Döblin considered that it was essential once and for all to be freed of such "ghosts." Moreover, in that early 1919 advancement of this position, "Die Vertreibung der



Gespenster," he also asserted: "Kaum ist schon Zeit zum Neuaufbau. Ganze Pyramiden, der Moloch des Gestern fordert alle Kräfte" (S, p. 82). Dos Passos was no less convinced of the necessity for new "edifices." In continuing to talk of spiritual and economic enslavement, he found his "Humble Protest" observations gloomily corroborated during and immediately after the war. Nevertheless, he also expressed the belief that an effort for change had to come, "perhaps out of the great stupid mass of America" (14C, p. 180). It would clearly have to be one which countered the devastation with the creation of different structures. A diary entry of August 30, 1918, for example, finds him writing of the need for a "new Contract Social," a "balance sheet between the power over the individual of a national government and the good to the individual of a national government." He continues: "Something must come out explaining in terms that the simplest person will understand that all the rights so many centuries have bled or struggled for, the rights of the governed against the governors--at the present day are so non-existent as to leave no inkling in the mind of anyone--and yet they have existed and they shall exist--The incubus of the old man of the sea of national government must be thrown off, as the incubus of feudalism and the incubus of religion have been thrown off--But God, have they? Haven't they merely appeared in new form" (14C, p. 208)?

Exactly what was to be done, and how, was unclear. When, in One Man's Initiation: 1917 (1920), Martin Howe reflects "We must find a way, find the first step of a way to freedom,"<sup>38</sup> the character is obviously acknowledging the concerns of his creator as well. The kind of mental ideological dialogue engaging Dos Passos at the time is





perhaps nowhere better expressed than in the novel's ninth chapter, with its French farmhouse kitchen exchange between Howe, the war-fatigued American ambulance driver, and the French representatives of anarchism (Lully), socialism (Merrier), revolution (Dubois), and their Jesuit foil (Chénier). Sketched out by Dos Passos in September 1918, when it still belonged to the unpublished Seven Times Round the Walls of Jericho (1917-22), "The great discussion" (14C, pp. 209-211) schematized those alternatives which might restore balance to that life described in "A Humble Protest": the rejection of all tyranny, single or multiform; disorganization and property abolition; reorganization "from the bottom" oppressed lower classes; and physical liberation combined with retaliation against the oppressors. Within One Man's Initiation, the hope rekindled in Howe as the issue of the discussion is offset by the grim conclusion's acknowledgment of the deaths of Merrier, Lully, and Dubois. If often vague and effusive, Dos Passos' own dialogue was somewhat more open-ended. In this last quality it contrasts with the relative conclusiveness of the formulations arrived at by Döblin.

The possibility of change had impressed itself upon both writers by the events coinciding with and contributing to the war's turning point. The forced abdication of the Czar on the fifteenth of March was greeted with enthusiasm by a war-weary Döblin. He welcomed the first phase of the Russian Revolution in the August 1917 Neue Rundschau with "Es ist Zeit!" Only in years to come, Döblin declared here, would the war's legacy fully emerge; for the present generation it would suffice to interpret what had transpired several months earlier in





Russia. Anticipated by her writers, notably Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the Russian events were more momentous than their eighteenth-century French predecessors. "Diese rührenden Befreiungen von Eingekerkerten," this "Rückkehr nach Jahrzehnten aus dem Elend" (S, p. 27). What is more, it had profound significance for Germans. Unlike the long years of peace, the war had forged a Volksgemeinschaft. Created from those mutual interrelationships indispensable to the waging of war and from the inevitable social equality imposed by death, this Volksgemeinschaft, the product of danger and distress, existed as potential in the consciousness and experience of its members. It remained for all those sharing responsibility for the war, particularly those closeted in the professions, to now emerge from their hiding places and to respond to the new ferment in the world and to the imperative ideas arising as the war's legacy. For Döblin, more than anything else, the generalized significance of the Russian Revolution was of paramount importance. Even by 1919, when his rejection of violent class warfare and the dictatorship of the proletariat led him to oppose much of Lenin's program, Döblin continued to speak of the "happy awakening of the Russian Revolution." As Linke Poot he conceded without hesitation that Lenin might well be "ein blinder Gewaltmensch" and author of a tyrannical system; nevertheless, long after his death, Lenin's work, "die Zertrümmerung des Zarismus und seines schamlosen Anhangs" would remain.<sup>39</sup>

Döblin's conclusions find parallels in the essential open-mindedness and receptivity marking Dos Passos' attitudes of the period. Like Döblin, the American avoided idealizing the Russian situation, particularly during the civil war of 1918-22. Despite the qualifications



he retrospectively imposed on his earlier enthusiasm--qualifications significantly influenced by the combination of Stalinism and a Communist betrayal of the Spanish Republican cause--Dos Passos very obviously viewed the Russian development as one of far-reaching and hopeful implications between 1918-24. The negative and threatening associations a complete example of thoroughgoing social change held for those in control in the West did not escape him. He understood, on the one hand, the motivation for the rampant, increasingly ugly anti-Bolshevism in the U.S. (14C, pp. 209, 276). Through his experiences in Spain and even in Portugal, Dos Passos also grasped the receptivity of peasants and industrial workers to the Russian developments. As a correspondent for the Daily Herald, a British Labour paper, his initial contact in the autumn of 1919 with his paternal grandfather's homeland was far from impressive. Nevertheless, he managed to see positive evidence there in Portugal. Several months later a Liberator article commented on worker and peasant interest in the spreading "story of Russia," and claimed that "in Portugal, as everywhere in the world, the giant stirs in his sleep."<sup>40</sup>

Much as with Döblin, it was largely the meaning of the Russian Revolution on which Dos Passos fastened. The observations made during his brief exposure to its actual consequences reveal the emphasis. In August 1921, journalistic coverage of the efforts of Near Eastern Relief, an organization working with refugees from the most recent Greco-Turkish conflict and the latest invasion of the Caucasus region, this time by the Red Army, brought Dos Passos into what subsequently emerged as the Georgian S.S.R. In articles for the Liberator and the Freeman, he





conveyed mixed reactions to what he saw: searing criticism of the American "humanitarians," praise for the constructive preliminary advances in education and culture under the new Soviet government seated at Tiflis and Batum, recognition of the sense of dislocation of an ethnically diverse population in a still unstable atmosphere, and an aversion to the methods of the Cheka in its counterrevolutionary campaign. Prudently avoiding any premature conclusions about his brief stay, however, Dos Passos confined himself to general reflections. The much dreamed about "wind out of Asia that would blow our cities clean of Things that are our gods, the knick-knacks and the scraps of engraved paper and the bases and the curtain rods, the fussy junk possession of which divides poor man from rich man, the shoddy manufactured goods that are all our civilization prizes, that we wear our hands and brains our working for" had, in fact, "blown Russia clean." Regarding its outcome, he queried: "Will the result be the same old piling up of miseries again, or a faith and a lot of words like Islam or Christianity, or will it be something impossible, new, unthought of, a life bare and vigorous without being savage, a life naked and godless where goods and institutions will be broken to fit men, instead of men being ground down fine and sifted in the service of Things?"<sup>41</sup>

Other glimmerings of the "something impossible" had appeared further west, in Spain. Prior to his war experience, between late 1916 and early 1917, a young Dos Passos, whose predilection for things foreign was not entirely a symptom of romantic escapism, had encountered there what he described in "Young Spain" as a contrast with "the restless industrial world of joyless enforced labor and incessant goading war"





(p. 488). Its people's dominant trait, that "strong anarchistic reliance on the individual man" (p. 476) was a weakness insofar as it translated itself into the cross-purposes of separate communities and centralized power, the lack of agreement on revolutionary aims in Catalonia, Andalusia, and Galicia, and elsewhere in that despairing inaction which caused "Spaniards to remain under a government of unbelievably corrupt and inefficient politicians" (p. 481). At the same time this anarchistic individualism was that very source of strength responsible for the "searing social criticism of the modern world in general and Spain in particular" which characterized the Generation of '98, those intellectuals and artists Dos Passos saw "piecing together the tattered shreds of national consciousness" (p. 482). It appeared to him as a consciousness which was not "wholly in the present capitalistic-patriotic sense, however, but something more fruitful, more local" (p. 482).

Of his 1917 attitude toward the example of Spain, Dos Passos observed seven years later: "the first thing you did every morning was still to look out of the window to see if the great revolution had burst with the dawn."<sup>42</sup> From the theatre of war it seemed to him that this revolution was a Spanish imperative. The 1918 letter to Pepe Giner asserted that it was for those in countries outside the battle to take up modern civilization's struggle for progress, a struggle for which Spain, like Russia, displayed a potential. This set Spain apart from the warring industrialized nations. Consequently, it was for Giner and his compatriots, who could make revolutions either "tranquillement ou tumultueusement," to evolve a purpose for "la vie de nos jours" (14C,



pp. 150-151).

By 1920 it seemed that the imperative was realizable. Postwar coverage of "Farmer Strikers in Spain" for the Liberator and reflections on "Andalusian Ethics" for the Freeman,<sup>43</sup> reportage subsequently incorporated into Rosinante, find Dos Passos realistic and also optimistic about the agrarian agitation among peasants in Andalusia where "As everywhere else, Russia has been the beacon-flare" (RRA, p. 109). Tracing the movement's inception from October of 1918, he deemed it one necessarily parallel to the struggle for control of industry until the emergence of a stronger community of interests between agricultural and industrial workers. Nevertheless, the relatively recent consciousness which had "begun to form among workers of the soil that it is possible for them to change their lot" (RRA, p. 109) presaged hope. Specifically, it signalled to Dos Passos and to Spaniards themselves that Andalusia, with Cordova its center of organization, would be at the forefront of the agrarian revolution comprising part of the general movement which would make "a clean sweep of Spanish capitalism and Spanish feudalism together" (RRA, p. 113). Clearly, for Dos Passos himself the Spanish development signified the breakthrough of potential alternatives to the feudalism and capitalism beyond Spanish borders as well.

Unlike Dos Passos, Döblin did not have to look outside his own country for anticipations of change. Although it ushered in no more than "an intermediate semi-revolution"<sup>44</sup> at best, the autumn of 1918 initially seemed to indicate that a German counterpart for the Russian "awakening" of 1917 was at hand. At its outbreak Döblin was geographically removed from the specific sites of revolutionary activity. He was,





however, able to gauge something of its effect in favorable Alsatian reactions to the October twenty-eighth sailors' mutiny at Kiel and in the chain of events precipitated by that insurrection.<sup>45</sup> Back in Berlin before November had ended, he had the opportunity to witness much of the three months of turbulence which attended the fall of the Empire and the rise of the Republic.

Döblin's return to civilian life found him committed to a socialism he had welcomed as progressive and necessary in 1917 during the first stage of the Russian Revolution. It also found him assessing the potential for its realization through the impact of the November Revolution and the establishment of the Republic. Utopian and pre-Marxist in its case, the socialism Döblin advocated embraced a liberating social reorganization. It proceeded, however, from an intellectual, as opposed to a political and an economic, transformation. In effect, the November Revolution, as he claimed in the 1919 "Dämmerung," "hat nicht Republik, Demokratie und Zivilismus gemacht. Sondern die Möglichkeit dazu" (S, p. 112). Another Neue Rundschau piece, the January 1920 "Republik," expressed his views in some detail. The desirable goal of the Revolution was the materialization of that great idea born with ethical socialism, "Diese Idee der staatlichen Gemeinschaft und des menschlichen Zusammenhangs, die absolut unwiderstehlich ist" (S, p. 123). For the achievement of such ends, Döblin recognized a necessary evolution of the state: "Die freie Staatsform, in diesem Augenblick und bei uns nur die Republik, ist die Voraussetzung zur Entwicklung eines Gemeinschaftsgebildes" (S, p. 123). In the society at large, however, the prerequisite was a new alliance of its





population's middle and lower strata. Responsibility for this realignment fell to that bourgeoisie to whom Döblin now addressed himself: "Freunde der Republik und Freiheit. Herüber nach links. An die Seite der Arbeiterschaft" (S, p. 126). Refusing to equate the middle class with those industrialists who created a terrible new form of feudalism through worker exploitation (S, pp. 114-115), Döblin anticipated its awakening to the forces of progress.

Döblin did not abandon his belief in a prise de conscience on the part of the German bourgeoisie until after 1933.<sup>46</sup> The Revolution and the Republic, however, fell far short of his expectations even as he was publishing his early commentary on their true goals. In the face of mounting daily evidence that the revolution had been compromised, Döblin responded in two ways. On the one hand, he sharply etched the outlines of a deeply troubled Germany in which the collapse of the Hohenzollern regime produced little else in the way of actual change, and where the Republic proved to be only a "German masked ball."

Nowhere is this more graphically demonstrated than in his Linke Poot glosses for Die neue Rundschau between 1919-21, most of them subsequently anthologized in Der deutsche Maskenball (1922), and much like verbal counterparts to George Grosz's drawings from the same period. Complements to the Zeitglossen are furnished by a number of Berlin vignettes under the Linke Poot pseudonym which appeared in the Berliner Tageblatt and the Frankfurter Zeitung (1922-24), by numerous contributions (most of them pre-1927) on social and political subjects under Döblin's own name to Die neue Rundschau, Der neue Merkur, Die Weltbühne, Die Welt am Abend, Die Stimme der Freiheit, the Berliner



Börsen-Courier, and the Vossische Zeitung, and by the Berlin theatre reviews for the Prager Tagblatt (1921-24). The result is a fairly comprehensive picture of postwar, postrevolutionary German life in its central arena, Berlin. Specific incidents and figures enter into Döblin's portrait, notably Noske's counterrevolutionary Freikorps, the Kapp putsch, and Rathenau's assassination. Yet it also embraces the period's many anonymous participants and less well publicized episodes. Moreover, Döblin unsparingly notes the perpetuation of old Wilhelmine forms of feudalism, increasing tolerance of new types of militarism and reaction, ugly manifestations of chauvinistic nationalism and anti-Jewish violence, restrictions upon intellectual freedom, suppression of leftist and Communist expression, and dramatic reminders of inflation, wide-scale unemployment, and acute shortages in food and housing.<sup>47</sup>

Despite such negative evidence, Döblin maintained his conviction that socialist revolution was necessary and inevitable. He did so by transcending the facts he recorded in satire, polemic, commentary, and reportage. Distancing himself from the material manifestations of failure documented by his journalism, Döblin ultimately incorporated his version of ethical socialism in a broad attempt to formulate a new metaphysic, a Naturphilosophie, for a new age. Its fullest articulation would appear in 1933 as Unser Dasein.

The multiple facets of Döblin's activity in the 1920s rule out any underlying causal explanation for his production which gives pre-eminence to one aspect over all others.<sup>48</sup> Within this decade he sought to reconcile his essentially non-materialist outlook with the unique features of the age and the pressing priorities of their specific material





manifestations. That this attempt had a significant political dimension distinct from, but subsequently subordinated to, the philosophical one has not usually been given the recognition it deserves. Consequently, some recapitulation of its expression is essential here.

Döblin's political thinking, as he himself acknowledged in "Die Vertreibung der Gespenster" apropos of his prewar inclination toward the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), tended toward abstraction and matters of principle rather than the practical concerns motivating many party members (S, p. 72). Nevertheless, the postwar, postrevolutionary period is one of leftist activity and affiliations for him. In outlook he appears close to the minority Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD), a coalition of diverse left-leaning thinkers opposed to the increasingly counterrevolutionary compromises and concessions by the new SPD government. More than anything else, the USPD or Independent Socialists represented a tenuous alliance between revolutionary and reformist brands of socialism because of their respective advocacy of proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy.<sup>49</sup> By October 1920 the growing disaccord between left and right wings within the party reached its nadir at the Halle Conference convened to determine the party's relationship to the Third International. In the resulting irreparable schism and subsequent mergers of the left wing with the Communists, the right with the Social Democrats, Döblin went the way of the latter. Although the precise nature of Döblin's USPD and SPD affiliations--that is, official membership or non-official sympathies and active participation--is a moot point, he did associate with reformist socialism's official exponents until a growing aversion





to party administration induced him to sever ties in the latter 1920s.<sup>50</sup>

On other fronts Döblin did not detach himself from either reformists or revolutionaries. Until the complete split between advocates of "proletarian revolutionary art" and those preferring to remain in the "bourgeois left" camp prevented any cohesion at the end of the decade, he was a member of "Gruppe 1925." Formed, as its name indicates, in the middle of the decade, when the left-right polarization had not yet reached its turning point, the association of activist-leftist writers of different political hues advocated and sought to define socially engaged literature. In a decade which saw not only the passage and application of laws against obscenity but the persecution of writers, such as Johannes R. Becher, and distributors of Communist literature on charges of high treason, Döblin championed freedom of expression and urged more liberal attitudes toward the Soviets. He did this, for example, as a participant in the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller, as codirector of the Aktionsgemeinschaft für Geistige Freiheit (1928-29), and as a member of the ill-fated Poetry Section of the Prussian Academy of Arts.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, for the purpose of achieving that interdependence in society he deemed desirable and necessary, Döblin rejected any specific party program. No doubt this rejection stemmed from his disenchantment with existing parties. But it was also motivated by the conviction that delegating responsibility for the welfare of society yielded less than satisfactory results. Divesting the term of its partisan connotations, Döblin expressed the belief that politics could no longer be left to the professionals, as the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia had allowed in the past.<sup>52</sup> At the



same time, however, Döblin's more general disavowal of a party-affiliated program is closely related to the manner in which he interpreted socialism.

Döblin's leftist sympathies, as commentators like Kreutzer, Beyer, and Graber have pointed out, did not recognize the inevitable close connection between the social and political goals of the Revolution. In this respect he was not unlike many bourgeois intellectuals within postrevolutionary Germany's socialist front, a number of whom were primarily responsive to the movement's anti-authoritarian and anarchic character. Nevertheless, through his longstanding intimacy with such east Berlin working class districts as Friedrichshain and Lichtenberg, and particularly through his postwar Kassenpraxis-residence at 340 Frankfurter Allee, Döblin was more familiar than many on the left with specific social problems and their consequences for the disenfranchised urban proletariat. His own class affiliations were ambivalent, as is common knowledge. From his experiences with economic deprivation, the result of his father's desertion in 1888, he sensed some kinship with the lower classes. With solid German Bürgertum he experienced little identification. Yet Döblin also perceived a distinct separation from the working class because of his petit bourgeois origins and his professional status.<sup>53</sup> While this separation does not explain the fact that Döblin's socialist vision contained nothing of the practical recommendations to be expected of a man of his experience, it probably contributed to his denial of the validity of the revolutionaries' platform. In class struggle he saw the perpetuation of divisiveness along class lines; in the dictatorship of the proletariat he saw a new





authoritarianism.

The fullest explanation of Döblin's position appears in that 1930-31 treatise which only partially emerged in response to a plea for intellectual and ideological guidance from the Bonn university student Rene Hocke. In the open letters forming Wissen und Verändern!, Döblin furthered his dispute with the Linkskurve advocates of "proletarian revolutionary art" who had dismissed Alexanderplatz and its author as representative of the inadequacy of "bourgeois left" thinking.<sup>54</sup> Here Döblin provided space for his rejection of that brand of socialism he knew from his own reading of Marx and probably more from the interpretations of Fritz Sternberg and Karl Korsch, whose lectures and study sessions he attended during the 1920s.<sup>55</sup> An opposition to Marxism, especially as practised by the Soviet and German Communists, on the basis of its materialism, dogmatism, rigid institutionalization, and economism, however, was accompanied by little more than an elaboration of the 1920 "Republik" argument. As he continued to define socialism in the utopian sense "als reine Kraft, Element in uns" (WV, p. 30), Döblin urged new means for the realization of the revolutionary idea summed up by "Freiheit, menschliche Solidarität, Ablehnung des Zwanges, friedlich Gesinnung" (pp. 32-33). A Soviet-style program was clearly inappropriate for a western nation like Germany. What Döblin envisioned was an interdependent, harmonious community originating in the alignment of the bourgeoisie with the proletariat, that class now entrusted with the bourgeois idea of freedom (pp. 58-59). Articulation of the means for achieving this goal, however, was something he preferred to leave to others.





Wissen und Verändern!'s generalizing and anti-revolutionary character did not escape the attention of its readers. If disconcerting, it is not altogether surprising to remark that those who responded well to the humanistic tract included, along with non-Communist socialists and liberal thinkers, the occasional Nazi sympathizer favorably impressed by Döblin's opposition to the radical workers' movement. Precisely this aspect of Döblin's thinking made a formerly well-disposed ally on the left like Walter Benjamin join the ranks of the work's negative critics.<sup>56</sup> Even after the controversy surrounding Wissen und Verändern! had subsided, Döblin remained steadfast in his utopian translation of socialism. A manuscript from the late 1930s, for example, considers a socialism betrayed by its German and Soviet deviations. Essential now was its restoration to its point of departure, the broad humanistic movement which "in allen Menschen den Menschen sieht und seine Gesellschaft erneuern will" (S, p. 370).

Although his own leftward sympathies were to evolve in a somewhat different direction, Dos Passos would probably have raised few objections to the essence of Döblin's argument. The 1926-37 period, during which the American writer is most heavily inclined toward anarcho-syndicalism and a popularized Marxism which embraces historical class struggle and economic determinism yet rejects class warfare and proletarian dictatorship, falls outside the boundaries of the present study. It is sufficient to say here, however, that the period's social criticism, journalism, pamphleteering, and active opposition to the repression of dissenters, anarchists, and organized labor are based largely on an eclectic radicalism and a humanistic assertion of the



rights of the individual. Dos Passos' post-1937 disaffection with many of those on the left to whom he had earlier given his sympathies, if not his total support, produced a complementary view of the vacuum Döblin saw created by German and Soviet-style socialism. Dos Passos, however, preferred to note a "Failure of Marxism" in the specific evidence of Stalin's suppression of individual liberties.<sup>57</sup>

During the earlier period which gives rise to Manhattan Transfer, attempts to find a suitable accommodation for the individual in mass society mark only the beginning of Dos Passos' inclination toward the left. His developing sympathies are as much the product of his aforementioned Spanish and European experiences as they are of his interest in the pacifist socialism of Emma Goldman, the anarchism of the Masses, the anti-war sentiments of the Freeman, and the anarcho-syndicalism of the ill-fated I.W.W. They appear to be far less a response to that Marxism of which he was "suspicious" (14C, p. 266) in 1919 and which he came to know more through its popularizations in postwar New York's radical circles than from his reading of Kapital's first volume immediately following the war.<sup>58</sup>

Despite its different stage of development, Dos Passos' position is not unlike Döblin's in several respects. As Döblin had anticipated real change under the Weimar Republic and saw around him only signs to the contrary, Dos Passos also observed largely negative evidence in what had formerly held out promise. Spain, for example, soon showed little of the transformation anticipated between 1917-20. Earlier "Everything was leading to the great revolution that was to be the old Adam's victory and transfiguration." In fact, Spain had succumbed to





counterrevolution. Only too clearly it revealed that "The old Adam wears Arrow collars and Walkover shoes and the machine he was to make his own is in the hands of Henry Ford and Mussolini and other less personable marionettes."<sup>59</sup> Far worse, the general American effort for change that was longed for from the European theatre of war was still invisible. In its place the increasingly severe repression of dissenters surrounding U.S. entry into the war as well as remnants of war patriotism persisted. Between 1918-21 these combined in a virulent reactions with far-reaching aftereffects to what was viewed as an immediate threat to the American system: Bolshevism.

The notorious "Red Scare" of the postwar years was more than an overreaction to bomb threats and actual explosions directed at various members of the ruling class. It also presented itself as more than a temporary aberration in the face of visible demonstrations of support for the October Revolution, international socialism, and major industrial strikes by an actually disunited American left. The massive campaign against "Bolsheviks" included a widespread effort against unionization in the major industries by a coalition of industrialists, politicians, and assorted conservative patriotic groups. Directed at May Day paraders of assorted persuasions, trade unionists, Blacks, liberals, reformers, immigrants, and pedagogues, the full onslaught involved the proliferation of hate propaganda and saw frequent examples of police, military, employer, and mob violence against political meetings, rallies, and strikes. It gave rise to Federal and state inquiries into the extent of Bolshevik influence in the country, the passage of peacetime sedition acts in almost every state of the union,





the frequent outlawing of Socialist and Communist parties in state legislation, and the detention and deportation of aliens and anarchists.<sup>60</sup>

Both the phenomenon and its immediate consequences struck Dos Passos in 1920 as but another contribution to the tarnishing of U.S. reputation abroad. The failure of Wilson's Fourteen Points had set the trend. It had been strengthened in 1920 by brutal U.S. Marine suppression of a one-and-a-half-year peasant uprising in the interior of Haiti, an island under American occupation since 1915. Now a new low was achieved by the examples of the "dervishes of militant capitalism," "the Hun-haters and lynchers and Bolshevik-baters, our Palmers and Burlesons," particularly "as duly communicated" through the jingo press. Even so, Dos Passos expressed the hope that from the mass of docile and compliant citizens would emerge a much-needed "compact opposition" to repudiate such domestic and international abuses of government.<sup>61</sup> This change, of course, went hand in hand with the broader one Dos Passos described to Pepe Giner as a purpose for modern life. Like Döblin, Dos Passos remained imprecise about the specific means for its achievement and directed his attention to the physiognomy of a technological, secular age. From this common ground, however, the two embark on different routes. Döblin proceeds from the material evidence toward a spiritualism he deems appropriate for the age; Dos Passos moves beyond its specific features into the realm of speculation without any resolution.



### Beyond the Physiognomy of the Age

If Dos Passos lamented the negative consequences of industrialism, between 1916-25 he did not consider it either possible or desirable to turn the clock back to a pre-industrial era. This was already apparent in his immature "Humble Protest," where emphasis fell on the humanizing of industrialism and technological advancement. European contact, particularly in Spain, revealed that such humanizing might also mean that those who operated the means of production might actually control them. In Spain Dos Passos also noted the positive potential of collectivity. Among its insurgent peasants, industrial workers, and intellectuals, within its rural villages and the city of Madrid itself, that nation of individualists had impressed him with diverse manifestations of "the communal quality of life in the region of the Mediterranean" (RRA, p. 190). Obviously, industrialized urban society, such as he knew it at home, could be neither Mediterraneanized nor restored to its agrarian roots. But the nature of its new surface features did not rule out the potential for its own communal transformation. The method of such transformation was not specified, although what had to emerge from it was. Dos Passos even saw it through the façade of New York.

Many aspects were presented to Dos Passos by the city which frequently served as the point of departure and arrival for him between 1917 and the spring of 1925. It was, on the one hand, "a number of different cities" (BT, p. 97) depending upon the social setting in which he found himself. New York also appeared as "a



continent in itself" which he recalled exploring "always as the visitor, the tourist on his way to the railroad station" (p. 149). As an off and on resident, Dos Passos clearly preferred the atmosphere of the city's Latin Quarter, Greenwich Village, as well as the Lower East Side of immigrants and imported radicals, to the Riverside Drive of affluent relatives.<sup>62</sup> Amused and stimulated by the city's extremes, he also viewed New York as a caricature of the contrasts it embraced and the machine culture it epitomized. This is very much its image following his return from the ambulance service and European residence in 1920. He finds New York, for example, "rather funny--like a badly drawn cartoon--everybody looks and dresses like the Arrow-collarman" (14C, p. 299). It is "damn jolly to look at. Babylon gone mad" (p. 300) and also "silly and rather stupendous" with its "skies--buildings garbage cans" (p. 302). "It has its hanging gardens of Babylon aspect. One talks to starving people on Park Benches. One eats eggplants squashed in oil of sesame in Syrian restaurants and drinks overmuch California chianti in the backs of Italian cafés. There are ferries and the Hudson and the palisades and in Stuyvesant Square the dry leaves murmur their deathrattle as softly as in the Luxembourg" (p. 303). At the same time New York is also a "noisome angular whirlpool" (p. 308) from which he leaves after his longest stay there between August 1920 and March 1921--that period which provided the material for Manhattan Transfer--following concessions to his publisher over the excision of blasphemies and obscenities in Three Soldiers.

That New York which struck him as simultaneously "marvelous" and "hideous"<sup>63</sup> also embodied quite a different set of antitheses





around the time of the writing of Manhattan Transfer between the autumn of 1923 and the spring of 1925. The theatre commentary of 1923-25 expresses it as the opposition between the present and potential aspects of the metropolitan character. As revealed in the "Foreword" for Lawson's Roger Bloomer, its actuality is that of the cities as "the junk heaps of boxed and predatory individuals" (p. v). A 1925 discussion of realistic theatre in Vanity Fair further characterizes it as "the rigid honeycomb of our pigeonholed lives." Beyond the actuality and the condition of life it symbolized, however, was something else: the "living organism," the "sentient whole" into which the "junk heap" or "rigid honeycomb" could be welded. At the time, Dos Passos declared that this metropolitan metamorphosis would coincide with the emergence of a "group consciousness" and professed his belief in a national theatre as its most direct organ. The use of the positive terminology, as has been suggested, may well derive from an indirect postwar acquaintance at the Sorbonne with Jules Romain's *Unanimism* and Emile Durkheim's sociology. Yet Dos Passos evinces here no belief that positive consequences, either individual or collective, and group consciousness necessarily derive from large-scale group existence. He acknowledges a potential for transformation but does the same for deterioration. The "Foreword" to Lawson's play neatly sums up the two possibilities: "But will the cities come alive? They will either come alive or be filled with robots instead of men" (p. v).<sup>64</sup>

For Döblin, who also perceived that the modern metropolis epitomized the life of the age, the realm of speculation was to hold less room for pessimism. A longtime Berliner, his knowledge of his



city far exceeded Dos Passos' largely spectatorial rapport with New York. Europe's second largest city, postwar Berlin of four million inhabitants, had a decided creative impact upon him, as he attested in a response to the Vossische Zeitung's 1922 inquiry, "Hemmt oder beeinträchtigt Berlin wirklich das künstlerische Schaffen?" Its most fascinating features had nothing to do with tame touristic manifestations of "culture" and "intellect." Rather, they were to be found in the city's chaotic movement, its mixture of people, and its industry:

Berlin ist wundervoll. Die Pferdebahnen gingen ein, über die Strassen wurden elektrische Drähte gezogen, die Stadt lag unter einem schwingenden, geladenen Netz. Dann bohrte man sich in die Erde ein; am Spittelmarkt versoff eine Grube; unter die Spree ging man durch bei Treptow, der Alexanderplatz veränderte sich, der Wittenbergplatz wurde anders: das wuchs, wuchs! Am Leipziger Platz der rauberhafte Wertheimbau, eine Strassenfront, wie belanglos ihr gegenüber das Herrenhaus, das Haus der ertrunkenen, schon längst begrabenen Herren. Am Schiffbauerdamm, in der Brunnenstrasse, die A.E.G.: eine Lust! Und weiter draussen in Tegel Borsig, und in Oberschöneweide noch einmal die A.E.G. Und das rebelliert, konspiriert, brütet rechts, brütet links, demonstriert, Mieter, Hausbesitzer, Juden, Antisemiten, Arme, Proletarier, Klassenkämpfer, Schieber, abgerissene Intellektuelle, kleine Mädchen, Demimonde, Oberlehrer, Elternbeiräte, Gewerkschaften, zweitausend Organisationen, zehntausend Zeitungen, zwanzigtausend Berichte, fünf Wahrheiten. Es glänzt und spritzt. Ich müsste ein Lügner sein, wenn ich verhehlte: öfter möchte ich asukneifen, das Geld fehlt; aber ebenso oft würde ich zurückkehren. Simson, der nach seinen Haaren verlangt.

The varied aspects of Berlin's character had attracted Döblin long before the 1920s. This is evident, for example, in the recently published fragment of "Modern. Ein Bild aus der Gegenwart" from 1896. It combined a short naturalistic narrative of a young woman's vain attempts to find employment in Berlin and her inevitable recourse to



prostitution with a polemical analysis of Wilhelmine class society's exploitation of women in the major industrial center (S, pp. 12-17, 471-472). Later a 1910 Berlin portrait for Der Sturm, "Das märkische Nineve," presented the industrial center as a place of huge dimensions. What particularly distinguished "Diese scharfe sehmentüchtiger und gedankenvolle Stadt" was the originality of its industrial enterprise; what marked its work-oriented inhabitants was their lack of a sense for either pleasure or socializing outside their occupations. Postwar Berlin's idiosyncracies and the diverse facets of its cultural, social, and political life were extensively documented in Döblin's aforementioned journalism of the decade. Its topography received special attention in two pieces for the Berliner Tageblatt between 1923-24. There the narrator, a LinkePoot mellowed since his Neue Rundschau appearances and heavily dependent on the present tense, moved through different parts of the city by foot, bus, and streetcar. Cameralike, he captured whatever locales, human types, and situations entered his field of vision. Beyond such observation and documentation in the 1920s, the city also became the object of generalization for Döblin. Abstracting its essential nature, he projected a Berlin already approaching that potential metamorphosis only glimpsed by Dos Passos through New York's façade.<sup>65</sup>

No less than Dos Passos, Döblin recognized the honeycomb likeness of the hub of industrial civilization. Its German connotations, however, were less pejorative than its American ones. In a preface to Mario von Bucovich's famous 1928 photographic essay Berlin, the place Döblin described as "eine unpoetische, sehr wenig bunte, aber





sehr wahre Stadt"<sup>66</sup> derived its true face from its massive cellular structure. The city's Nachlassgarderobe, the visible legacy of artifacts inherited from its multitude of deceased, did not now present Berlin's true nature. That, Döblin continued, was to be found in the streets running east, north, and south, with their anonymous blocks of flats. The face of Berlin, "das ernste Massenwesen" (p. xii), best revealed itself to the traveler toward late evening on the express train moving from the south or west into this vast "sea of stone." Like the honeycomb, in which the individual six-sided wax cells were distinguishable but existed exclusively as part of the total arrangement, the city was apprehended only by the total structure of its parts and by the requirements and spirit of its "hive." As he sped from station to station past illuminated streets, movie houses, apartment blocks, bridges, and smokestacks, the visitor saw the imposing, sober, modern city as a producing Massensiedlung (p. xi). Its dominant aspect prohibited the possibility of speaking of one isolated part of Berlin or of a single building. Its rhythm, Döblin remarked, was that of a huge Arbeitswille with an energy, urgency, and seriousness capable of drawing in even the most indolent Viennese.

In one sense such considerations constitute an expansion of Döblin's 1910 Berlin portrait, "Das märkische Nineve." Yet they bear the undeniable imprint of a double transformation: the one undergone by the metropolis following the war and the one Döblin himself experienced in outlook. As seen by Döblin, that Berlin so substantially increased in size and activity had already "come alive." It assumed the dimensions of a collective being which would evolve into something



approximating Dos Passos' "sentient whole." The arena of activity for new city-dwelling types, this Berlin had begotten a breed more austere than that of past decades. Having grown up in industry under factory walls, buffeted by winds of class struggle and politics, the type emerged as the urban proletariat ("Geleitwort," p. xi).

In a foreword to the work of another distinguished photographer, Döblin asserted the type's pre-eminence. August Sander's Antlitz der Zeit (1929)--a collection of sixty photographs of twentieth-century Germans which Döblin interpreted as a thirty-year economic and class history--opens with individual and group compositions of prewar rural types unmistakably secure in demeanor. For its final portrait it offers a lone male figure, obviously absorbed in his thoughts and leaning against a wall. This picture of a working-class Berliner bears the caption "Arbeitslos 1928." Döblin's prefatory remarks describe him as the "creature of the age."<sup>67</sup> Such a claim is merely the reiteration of an earlier one. In the 1920 "Republik" essay, Döblin had hailed the appearance of the entire class to which this Berliner belonged with the observation, "Eine neue Rasse, eine neue Lebendigkeit tritt auf den Schauplatz" (S, p. 125). Without ignoring the difficult conditions experienced by this "new race," in his speculative projections of Berlin Döblin chose not to explain the unemployment Sander recorded in terms of capitalism and socialism. Instead, what Döblin described as the workers' struggle against degradation was an unresolved social question which arose as the partial effect of modern life's technological-industrial impulse. The same force determined the form and function of Berlin; worker and entrepreneur were, in a sense,





its organs. Neither inherently bad nor good, it was the spirit of a new age, and its full character had not yet been disclosed.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike Dos Passos, who had progressed beyond a largely negative Charakteristik of the age to only contemplate the possibility of its transfiguration, Döblin deliberately focused on the positive implications and transcendental aspects of a technological-industrial era. Linke Foot, in the July 1920 Neue Merkur "Revue," had already looked beyond the materialism which appeared to be so inextricably linked up with the times: "Trotz Materialismus, starken Umsichgreifens des Mechanisierens lebt etwas in diesen europäischen Ländern einschliesslich Amerikas. Die Grossstädte werden sich ihre Typen und Formen schaffen. Man sei nicht ungeduldig. Man hat den Heiland nicht gesehen, als er lebte; auch Cäsar ist von Jahrhundert zu Jahrhundert gewachsen. Was in der Grossstadt, den Industrien gewaltig pulsiert, wird keine Verachtung totmachen." Several months later, in his "Krieg und Frieden" essay for Der neue Merkur, he related that potential interdependence of human beings of which he began speaking in 1917 to the social drive, "eine biologisch wirksame Kraft, die auf die Menschengeschlechter mit derselben Stärke wirkt und gewirkt hat wie der Aufenthalt in Höhlen, die Belichtung durch Tropensonne" (S, p. 162). At present it endowed the human race, which possessed it as a virtue and a capability, with life. By 1924 Döblin assessed the industrial age's full human, social, and non-materialist potential. His considerations appeared in the futuristic "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters." They serve as an elaborate contradiction of Dos Passos' "Humble Protest" evaluation of industrialism as well as some of the American's subsequently grimmer projections of





systematized ant colonies (14C, p. 281) and cities filled with human robots.

According to Döblin, far-reaching consequences were produced by the new monarchs presiding over the age and also, as he had proclaimed earlier in the 1920 "An die Geistlichkeit," reigning over man's intellect (DM, p. 49). At the outset some of these effects manifested themselves as the inevitable confusion arising from the collision of epochs: "das Kleinheitsgefühl, stammend aus der Einsicht von der verlorenen zentralen Stellung in der Welt, und der Einsicht in die Belanglosigkeit des tierisch-menschlichen Einzelwesens" (AzL, p. 66). There were, however, very hopeful conclusions to be made about the decades of extensive scientific and technological achievement. More precisely, there were conclusions to be drawn from that new Zeitgeist which had emerged with industry in the middle of the preceding century and now prevailed in Europe and America. Maintaining that it had severed man's connection with transcendental learning and practice, Döblin chose to call it a "naturalistic" spirit because it exposed nature to man. Its influence on human life was readily apparent. Where before there had been passivity and living conditioned by a view toward the hereafter, there was now a new freedom and independence, a Diesseitigkeit in which self-sufficiency and the drive toward activity were dominant. Equally significant was the impact of the naturalistic spirit upon the social drive and the attendant readjustment of human groups.

Modern Western man, in Döblin's estimation, was undeniably urban man. His habitat, however, was very different from the city of the past, "ein besonderes Gebilde, das in sich und aus sich lebendig



wuchs" (AzL, p. 72). Formed by the new active spirit of the age, the Grossstadt or technological city had been required by the need for workplaces and therefore directly expressed the characteristic monotony, uniformity, and specific rationalization of the technological age. Whereas previously one city was unique and unmistakable from any other, now each technological metropolis was differentiated largely through its local coloration and its population's temperament. At the same time the Grossstadt was also the site of a new phenomenon: collective man. It acted, reacted, and behaved in many ways like a single powerful creature. Döblin viewed it as a further stage in the evolution of the human animal, a creature who had clearly undergone recent environmental adaptation. In this connection Döblin noted specific indications attesting changes in the species, such as a new use of the auditory and visual senses and the muscles by urban, industrial man. He also anticipated that major transformations in sex roles and the diminution of traditional secondary sex characteristics would follow from woman's full equality as a worker alongside man, a development coincident with the demise of the patriarchal family. Changes like these, however, were subordinated to the all-embracing one Döblin optimistically predicted. Although at present, within the streets of the metropolis, one could almost physically feel the turmoil of its inhabitants' drives and tensions, it was not chaos, friction, or even the mechanized horror sometimes contemplated by Dos Passos, that Döblin foresaw. It was instead the human species' new and conscious experience of its collective character, its social nature, and the interconnectedness of its members that he discussed elsewhere within the context of his socialism.





Read from the distance of several decades which have only too dramatically demonstrated some abuses and misuses of science and technology, Döblin's picture of Things to Come appears naïvely utopian in many respects. Elsewhere it strikes a disquieting note. A projected transcendence of traditional national boundaries, for example, appears to admit a necessary imperialism based on technological expansion and the struggle for requisite material (AzL, pp. 75-76). In his study of Döblin's intellectual development, Klaus Müller-Salget has observed that the collective creature Döblin described soon materialized in grotesque caricature under the form of institutionalized Fascism (p. 380). Within the essay, however, Döblin clearly considered the fascist tendency as antagonistic to what he was proposing by interpreting the signs of the age. He remarked, for example, that the strong, anachronistically rural and nationalistic impulses often associated with racism were precisely those forces actively opposing the age's prevailing character. Among them he included contemporary German currents, the Zionism propagandized among European Jews, and the American Ku Klux Klan (AzL, pp. 80-81).

If ominous in some respects, the essay is still an obvious companion piece to the picture of life on earth between the twenty-third and twenty-seventh centuries which presented the rise of vast industrial complexes in Berge Meere und Giganten (1924). Following that novel's publication, Döblin offered a June 1924 Neue Rundschau explanation that the work was inspired by the desire to deal with the present time, although not in the manner of Zola or Balzac.<sup>69</sup> Like the novel, the essay is a major attempt to counter the dominant German culture's tendency to ignore and even resist the specific phenomena of industrial-





ization and urbanization as well as their intellectual and artistic significance. In "Der Geist" Döblin once again called special attention to this feature of German life and letters (AzL, pp. 78-79). But the visionary argument contains much more than a variation on Döblin's frequent critical theme. Its open-ended interpretation and testimony in behalf of the age form a particular profession of faith.

Despite evidence to the contrary, the materialism of the age was only an apparent one. Döblin saw his claim partially corroborated by current mystical and even occult impulses that had surfaced in the arts and sciences. There were some very important non-materialistic conclusions to be drawn from this new age which was, in fact, still in its infancy: "Die Naturwissenschaften von heute ziehen sie noch nicht und können sie nicht ziehen, da alles noch sehr am Anfang ist. Es muss noch viel mit der Vergangenheit gekämpft werden. Die Welt ist nicht auf Anhieb neu zu erleben. Früher drehte sich die Welt um einen abstrakten Punkt, um Gott; was wird aus ihr, wenn sie sich um die Sonne dreht? Dies ist jetzt die Generalfrage. Die seelischen Konsequenzen des Kopernikus sind noch nicht gezogen. Die Natur ist im ersten Abschnitt dieser Periode nur unbekannt und wird leidenschaftlich erforscht; später wird sie Geheimnis. Dies Geheimnis zu fühlen und auf ihre Weise auszusprechen, ist die grosse geistige Aufgabe dieser Periode" (AzL, p. 83).

It was to this task, in fact, that Döblin devoted some of his energy during the decade. His intellectual efforts point up the major difference between his own orientation and that of Dos Passos. The American felt the need for evolving a purpose for modern life during



the war. A decade later the need was not yet met. Writing on American theatre in December 1930, he speaks, for example, of the necessity of creating a "new myth". It is the one "that's got to be created to replace the imperialist prosperity myth if the machinery of American life is ever to be gotten under social control." The contrast between this essential focus on the social consequences of material conditions and Döblin's attention to their intellectual and spiritual effects is illustrated around the same time in the two writers' responses to inquiries "Sur l'inquiétude contemporaine" from the Parisian Cahiers de l'Etoile. Directed to a number of prominent thinkers and writers of assorted nationalities, the questionnaire pursued a definite line of thought. It asked not only about the existence of an inner restlessness peculiar to the epoch but also how this restlessness was expressed in the social, sexual, religious, and creative spheres of life. Did, for example, the interdependence of countries, the consolidation of populations in large centers, collective machinism, and individual automatism lead to the human personality's destruction? Was this restlessness not the suffering of a humanity seeking to recover its unity by freeing itself from the prisons of time, space, and individual solitude? If so, did a period of great uneasiness not mark the awakening of a new consciousness? Regarding the existence of a restlessness, Döblin and Dos Passos concurred; regarding its forms of expression, causes, and consequences, however, they provided rather different views.<sup>70</sup>

The anxiety which now appeared as a European and American crisis originated before the war but was brought to light by that experience. Speaking of its German forms only, Döblin perceived it in a conflict





between opposite camps. With respect to the progress of the natural sciences and technology, it manifested itself as an obvious polarization: "Là le front des 'extrasifs'--les adoreurs du sport et de la technique, ici le front des 'intrasifs'--qui ont trouvé la suprématie humaine, y tiennent et la placent au centre du monde" (p. 1096). Elsewhere, showing a more marked degree of strain, it materialized as sympathy and antipathy for democracy.

Dos Passos was more precise. The restlessness was a further stage in the successive crises of the industrial and mechanical revolution which had transformed a society based on manual labor and agriculture into one based on mechanical production controlled by capital. That development allowed individuals to construct a badly balanced society. "L'inquiétude," he continued, "serait une étape marquant la recherche de nouveaux nivellements, de nouveaux équilibres qui ne sont pas, nécessairement, satisfaisants en eux-mêmes" (p. 879). Uncertain if such a period was necessarily one of creative activity, the American maintained that the age's innovators--Lenin, Einstein, Pavlov, Freud, Picasso, Joyce, and Stravinsky--had achieved their full expression before the uncertainty created by the war made its presence felt. Whether this particular decade produced fermentation or stabilization remained to be seen. Within his own country Dos Passos saw no new state of consciousness comparable to the one, for example, represented by a Russian communism which was so distinct from the old Europe. Rather, the U.S. revealed an acceleration of the mentality developing there since its Civil War. "[La] maturation de l'idée dominante de la Nation" displayed itself as an attack of self-consciousness and the final





stifling of the preconceptions and hopes of primitive democracy. In economic life the tendency corresponded to the suppression of small farmers and merchants and to society's entire domination by a union of corporations. These, in their turn, were dominated by small groups of rapacious capitalists (p. 879).

Juxtaposed with the American's reply, the rest of Döblin's contribution reads much like its direct contradiction. The German's answers are also more in keeping with the suppositions implicit in the questionnaire. Although it would take decades for the inner restlessness presently experienced to assume its full creative power, Döblin saw its positive consequences in all spheres of life. Moreover, where Dos Passos confined himself to short-term forecasts, Döblin preferred the long-range view: "Ce siècle est l'aurore d'une ère nouvelle dans la vie commune de l'homme" (p. 1097). Its goal, the unification of humanity, the great "homme mélange" of Nietzsche (p. 1097), was already implied by the currency of socialist and communist tendencies and the decline of aristocracies. Finally, a new consciousness was indeed evident. As its signs Döblin cited the giving way of rational and mechanical thought to "la tendance de redécouvrir la nature et l'homme qui déteint sur une religiosité nouvelle mais encore incertaine" (p. 1097). It is not at all surprising that Döblin was able to provide this kind of response based on German evidence alone at the close of a decade he had described as "fascist" in a 1923 Prager Tagblatt review. He had already transcended the specific historical phenomena of the period in seeking a non-materialist rationale for a secular age and in fully asserting other dimensions for it beyond its technological and "American" ones.



Expounded in Unser Dasein (1933), the results of his effort were already partially articulated in Das Ich über der Natur (1927) and developed through more than a dozen periodical contributions between 1920-29, some of them subsequently incorporated in the 1927 and 1933 works.<sup>71</sup>

Participating in a 1926 survey on the subject of pseudonyms, Döblin described his ventures into Naturphilosophie as one facet of the major tripartite division of his writing which also included his novels and his pseudonymous socio-critical journalism. All were projections from the same source; all amounted to fragmented attempts to shape his thought more adequately.<sup>72</sup> In effect, through his philosophical naturalism or naturism, Döblin achieved an intellectual parallel to the artistic conquest of material reality he was to advocate as an aesthetic. From the earliest of the naturist writings through Das Ich über der Natur, he postulated the spiritual nature of all interrelated and mutually corresponding forms of existence, organic and inorganic. The world experienced temporally and spatially was actually the multi-dimensional expression of a universal primal force of creation, a supersensual "Ur-Ich" or "Ur-Sinn." A splintering off of the force, man, an "Einzel-Ich," was likewise part of the network of interrelationships in this living, spiritualized nature. His consciousness enabled him to recognize a total interconnectedness and order through apparent chaos. With the 1933 appearance of Unser Dasein, a work largely conceived between 1927-28, this naturism fusing biological phenomenology, modern research in the natural sciences, and the Taoism which had interested Döblin in Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun, assumed the proportions of a full-scale philosophy of existence. It ultimately





determined Döblin's position vis-à-vis contemporary social, political, and even artistic problems.<sup>73</sup>

In the fully elaborated scheme, cognition was intimately related to activity and change. Indeed, man could draw the consequences for his own behavior from this naturism. Döblin never specified how perception of the great collectivity of which man formed a part could generate the action for social progress or how potential spiritual energy could be converted into socially realizable action. He nevertheless maintained that one inevitably proceeded from the other. Once cognizant of the spiritual nature and interconnectedness of life, man would draw those moral conclusions necessary for overcoming socially retrograde tendencies toward isolation on the part of either individuals or groups. As a result, the "Ur-Ich" would be increasingly realized in human society, a parallel to the natural world. The process would be simultaneous with the growth of group consciousness indispensable to the transformation of the social organism. The close relationship between this formulation and Wissen und Verändern! is unmistakable. In essence, as Leo Kreutzer has aptly remarked, the socialism Döblin divested of materialism was now infused with mysticism.<sup>74</sup>

What began as an attempt to counteract the "Prostitution des Denkens in der technisch-industriellen-militärischen Zeit" (IN, p. 220), that human endeavor necessary to overcome the negative spiritual and intellectual effects of the age's apparent materialism, finally emerged as the newly awakening, untraditional religiosity to which Döblin referred in his Cahiers de l'Etoile response (p. 1096). To some extent Döblin's naturism sustains the non-materialist cast to his thinking





which, from early on, had revealed itself as the vitalistic character of life and nature. This is evident in such initial literary efforts as Der schwarze Vorhang (1902-3; published 1919), the one-act Lydia und Mäxchen (1905; published 1906), and the 1903-11 stories later anthologized in Die Ermordung einer Butterblume und andere Erzählungen (1913). But the early writings had tended to depict the dramatic opposition between the isolated individual, often the victim of personality disintegration, and the vitalism's multiple manifestations which were usually hostile to him.<sup>75</sup> Antagonisms and disintegration are missing from the postwar decade's developing naturism, a hybrid product of myriad sources. These include the studies in technology, science, natural phenomena, Taoism, and Buddhism preparatory to the writing of the novels which preceded Alexanderplatz as well as Döblin's earlier interest in Hegel, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. The naturism's postulation of a positive active potential for an inherently spiritual human nature also bears the imprint of Döblin's own experiences. Among these must be classed his interpretation of the Volks-gemeinschaft created by the war and his understanding of ethical socialism. Equally important is his specific apprehension of an actively realized spirituality during the 1924 trip to Poland he recounted in Reise in Polen (1926). Apparently inspired by his Berlin contacts with Jewish activists and Zionists at the beginning of the decade, Döblin undertook the trip as an inquiry into Jewish experience outside the alternatives of Western assimilation and the Zionism he rejected. In recently independent Poland, among some of the newly self-conscious Slavic minorities, Döblin saw this active spirituality most dramatically



represented by unassimilated Eastern European Jews. Despite long years of oppression, they had maintained both a sense of community and, in certain cases, a unique brand of religious fervor.<sup>76</sup>

As it fully evolved, the naturism which drew its impetus from such varied stimuli ignored the very history for which it was designed and which it was to significantly affect. Oblivious to the problems posed by his abstract formulation, Döblin only recognized its limitations in the late 1930s in terms of an impracticability in the face of current events.<sup>77</sup> In the course of the 1920s, however, Döblin's self-conscious attempt to consolidate a world picture and his simultaneous efforts to achieve a position vis-à-vis society in the light of contemporary history were not yet completely integrated. The near merging of what began as parallel developments was to contribute to an ambiguity and a presence of contradictory tendencies in that literature produced at the end of the decade.

This complex interaction between the lessons Döblin drew from contemporary history and his elaborate translation of the physiognomy of the age has no equivalent in the case of Dos Passos. Moreover, the American's anti-materialism had far less to do with speculative idealism than a humanism which tended toward pragmatism. Yet if he was little concerned with the variety of spiritual consequences which attracted Döblin, Dos Passos' 1925 novel is not lacking in their reflection. It can even be argued that Manhattan Transfer represents that condition Alexanderplatz attempted to alleviate. Although in one sense the German novel's author proved more successful than his American counterpart in achieving a cohesive interpretation of the new



realities of life, his success was confined to the realm of pure speculation. In the long run both Döblin and Dos Passos were on somewhat firmer ground in grasping and expressing the artistic consequences of the experience they confronted ideologically.





## CHAPTER IV

### NON-AESTHETICS FOR A NEW AGE

#### The Imperatives of Reconciliatory Art

"We may as well admit that for our time there are no questions of aesthetics." From this introductory observation Dos Passos launched his 1925 Vanity Fair defense of non-realistic theatre in general and John Howard Lawson's expressionist jazz drama, "Processional," in particular.<sup>1</sup> By "questions of aesthetics," the American meant the application of traditional and irrelevant formal criteria to art which in form and function desperately needed to absorb the life around it. So typical of Dos Passos' preference for hyperbole, the proclamation is nevertheless an appropriate summation of both his own artistic outlook and that of Döblin during the twenties.

By and large the two writers' perspectives defy exclusive identification with any one of the programmatic movements of the period. Yet they clearly align them with Modernism's more progressive currents and that Apollinairean strain seeking the restored unity of art and public which would reconcile man and art with society via profound change in both social and artistic spheres.<sup>2</sup> Inextricably linked up with the general intellectual coherence sought by Dos Passos and Döblin, their aesthetic views admit several new priorities. On the one hand, art had to reflect the radical transformations of experience in a postwar, postrevolutionary, technological world; on the



other, the very nature of art and the role of its creator in that world's industrialized and largely urban society required readjustment and redefinition. These latter accommodations were of particular significance to Dos Passos and Döblin. In their attempts to interpret the role now imposed on the writer by external conditions, both recognized a necessary integration of the artist in the life of the times. Antithetical to images of the marginal creator on the periphery of society, their attitudes acknowledged the dynamic interrelationship between the artist and his total milieu. Neither Dos Passos nor Döblin challenged the fundamentally individualistic basis of the bourgeois artist's self-definition. They did, however, seek to overcome that estrangement and disengagement which had increasingly characterized his social stance since the latter nineteenth century.

For Döblin, the efforts at redefinition granted the writer's role multiple dimensions, including the political one. There was no denying the writer's identification as zoon politikon. Whether aware of it or not, he was thoroughly politicized as an individual human being. Strictly speaking then, as Döblin announced in his 1924 "Schriftsteller und Politik," there were no non-political writers. But a question presently existed as to whether or not the writer should be consciously concerned with politics as part of his activity. To this, Döblin unhesitatingly responded in the affirmative: "Der Schriftsteller muss Politik als einen integrierenden Teil des Geistigen, als wesentliche Äusserung des Geistes erfassen" (S, p. 234). Issued during his tenure of office as president of the German Writers' League, Döblin's statement reflects his belief that responsibility for society's





well-being could no longer be delegated by a disaffected bourgeoisie to the professional politicians. His affirmation of political involvement on the part of the writer is also an important affirmation of art. The latter's pursuit in isolation from politics had contributed only to its estrangement from the life of the times. This was especially true in the two tendencies Döblin noted among artists whose work between 1910-20 had been inspired by anti-bourgeois sentiments. He described them in his 1920 "Republik" essay as "die Künstler der einen Seite, die Kunst für belanglos halten und Gesinnung und Kampf für Gesinnung an erste Stelle rücken, und die auf der anderen Seite, denen die Kunst zu einem fast äusserlichen artistischen Spiel wird" (S, p. 126). A series of reconciliatory relationships between the writer, the public, and even the state were essential now in a technological age and in a bourgeois republic. As envisaged by Döblin, these relationships would ultimately bring about a rehabilitation and renaissance of art.

From the outset Döblin's assertions had only a tangential connection with the pros and cons of Tendenzkunst. That he did not consider this route sufficient to meet the new requirements of art is apparent in the 1928 "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung" address expressing sentiments which would be partially reproduced several years later in Unser Dasein. Although tendentious works sought contact with life, they did so with properties borrowed or stolen from older art works. For that reason they offered a short circuit instead of the requisite contact between art and life. Elsewhere, however, in other writings that touch upon politically oriented art, a subject much discussed in





the twenties by German writers of the bourgeois and revolutionary left, Döblin reveals himself as a kind of mediator between warring factions. Recognizing that art designed to influence its audience often ran the risks of schematism or else deteriorated to pure didacticism and propaganda, Döblin criticized such weaknesses in contemporary drama, notably that of Ernest Toller. But toward Tendenzkunst per se, a category to which he also assigned humanistic and religious art, Döblin displayed no hostility. Apropos of Leopold Jessner's severely criticized 1924 production of Weinricht's Kolumbus on behalf of the Catholic Volksbühnenbund, for example, Döblin declared, "Das blosse 'gute' Kunstwerk ist wertlose Spielerei." With the mythically "free" variety favored by the very class which sponsored German art, Döblin equated an art muzzled and contrained. Furthermore, Tendenz was not inimical to art. In his 1929 "Kunst ist nicht frei, sondern wirksam: ars militans," he held that Tendenzdichtungen and Kunstwerke were not mutually exclusive, something incontrovertibly proven by Dante's Commedia.<sup>3</sup> These convictions notwithstanding, the conclusions Döblin drew for art in the new age were not centered about the Tendenz debate.

They had even less to do with what Döblin in 1921 called the mechanical politicization of the writer. By that he meant the alliance of the writer with a political party as its member or spokesman. Döblin did not explicitly attack such politicization until the latter 1920s when writers affiliated with the Communist Party advocated Proletarian Art and "partymindedness" as the only viable program for the socially conscious artist. Although his increasingly negative reactions were undeniably colored by the Linkskurve's attacks on his work, Döblin's



rejection of the KPD prescription was a rebellion against the dogmatism of a campaign imported from the Soviets. It was also an assertion of the individualistic and anarchistic nature Döblin attributed to art. The creation of one private ego, an art work directly affected individuals who in turn responded to it. Never, however, did it enter into immediate contact with groups or society as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

Despite Döblin's adherence to the notion of privately inspired and produced art, his thinking allowed the writer's impact on society at large. It even stressed the new necessity of such impact. This is obvious at the very beginning of the decade. The May 1921 address on the subject of "Staat und Schriftsteller" finds Döblin specifically remarking on the state of the nation and the nature of the age, both of which require the writer's attention. Having compared Germany's present condition in the new bourgeois republic to one of trance, Döblin remarks: "Dinge, die längst nicht mehr real sind, entfalten ganz unwahrscheinliche psychische Wirkungen, frische Eindrücke klingen an und werden verschlungen; man macht exzessive Bewegungen nach irgendeinem Ziel, das als Ideal erscheint; alles wechselt überaus rasch. Das Durcheinander, das Schwere, Mühselige des Zustandes wird jedem, der in diesem Staat lebt, fühlbar" (AzL, p. 52). Among the masses of people, recently liberated but not yet stabilized, an intermediate stage of development was under way. If the situation was one of flux, however, it was still apparent that irrevocable changes had occurred and new forces had been unleashed:

Man will langsam wieder auf eigenen Boden treten. Ich sage nicht: auf den alten Boden. Die Dinge haben sich gründlich





geändert und sind nicht wiederzurufen. So wie niedergedrücktes Getreide sich wieder aufrichtet, erheben sich im ganzen Volk die ungenutzten Kräfte, es will noch ungeregt die Vitalität heraus, die hier verheimlicht war. Überall treten die Menschen zu Verbänden zusammen, besprechen ihre Sachen, bilden Selbstverwaltungskörper. Und während oben noch die alten Ideologien flottieren und ihren Schaum schlagen, ändern sich die Menschen, ihr Verhältnis zueinander, es gruppiert sich alles langsam um. Und langsam wird die angebaute Bewegung grössere und grössere Kreise ziehen und wird sich bis in das Persönlichkeitsgefühl, bis in die Sittlichkeit hinein umgestaltend auswirken (AzL, p. 53).

This was precisely the moment for the writer to surmount the degradation of the prewar, prerevolutionary period and achieve new worth and value. Now, when the great power motivating industry, technology, and commerce appeared omnipotent, the writer had a particular responsibility. The age's dominant forces were capable of neither building the state nor preserving and advancing humankind. His life bound up with the intellect, the writer was. Moreover, technology, industry, and commerce, which ought never to lose their character as mankind's tools, were about to be transformed from implements into blind authoritative forces capable of subduing humanity. This metamorphosis had to be countered by the intellect: "Niemand von uns darf vor ihrem eisernen Lärm verzagen" (AzL, p. 54). To do so, the writer had to acknowledge the new human cohesiveness wrought by recent history: "Es gibt aber noch eine elementare Kraft in dem Menschen neben der Kraft, die Industrie und Technik entwickelt hat, das ist die: Zusammenhalten mit dem Menschen, die Gemeinschaft zu pflegen, die sittlichen Triebe als unvergleichlich wichtig fühlen. Und diese Kraft ist stärker, elementarer und früher als irgendeine andere. Sie ist es und keine andere, die das eigentliche Wesen des Menschen ausmacht. Und das ist unser Gebiet, das Gebiet der verantwortlichen Menschen und der Verbreiter





des Wissens" (AzL, p. 54).

In assigning to the writer the task of humanizing and cultivating the state, Döblin offered specific recommendations. They grew out of his observations that at present, the huge masses of the so-called common people traditionally neglected by German writers wanted and were obliged to assert themselves. Thus it behooved authors of prose, poetry, and drama to graduate from their longstanding identification with the sorrows, passions, temptations, and vices of one class exclusively as their subject matter. It was now important to participate in the experience of this actively emerging lower class and to animate artistic production accordingly so that it represented and was comprehended by this sector (AzL, pp. 57-58).

Expressed during a transitional period in which Döblin saw writers still unsettled in their roles, his views purposely underscored the new necessities imposed by the age. Because of this feature, Döblin's observations read like a definite complement to Dos Passos' "Humble Protest" critique of industrialism. Summarizing his position, he concluded: "Inmitten des Dröhnens der Fabriken, inmitten der Schaulenster, welche die Menschen reizen und beunruhigen, inmitten des politischen Zanks wollte ich, ohne Resignation, vielmehr voller Hoffnung, die Schriftsteller ansprechen. Sie möchten nicht teilnehmen an der Erregtheit und Verzweiflung dieser Zeit. Die alten Vorzüge der Geistigen mögen ihnen in jedem Augenblick zur Seite stehen, ihre unverwelkbare Kenntnis um die wirklichen ideellen Lebensgüter, diese Lebensgüter, die einmal wieder als Fixsterne auch unseres verwirrten Abendlandes erscheinen werden. Diese Kenntnis wird die Schriftsteller zu strengster Selbster-



ziehung verpflichten" (AzL, p. 61). In the course of the decade, the mutually beneficial interrelationship hopefully projected by Döblin in 1921 between writers sensing their new responsibilities and a state receptive to them and to their intellectual achievement failed to materialize. The development most certainly accounts for the fact that Döblin quickly relinquished his faith in the possibility of the state's evolution. He did not, however, abandon his commitment to the writer's vanguard role he held to be determined by the times and by art's essential nature "als Instrument des Geistes und als Gefäss des Geistes."<sup>5</sup>

For his part Dos Passos was no less convinced that the writer could not ignore imperative adjustments in his role and what he produced. Compared to Döblin, however, the American was less specific during the early 1920s in expressing the distinct accommodations and the writer's social responsibility. Dos Passos scholarship is not free from the tendency to perceive Manhattan Transfer's genesis in terms of post-1925 influences and its author's evolved 1927-35 aesthetic.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, it is important to differentiate here between the mature views and their germinal stage. In the post-Manhattan Transfer period, notably the years following the Sacco and Vanzetti executions, Dos Passos frequently interpreted the writer's social and moral obligations. This is particularly evident in his theatre commentary. A 1927 New Masses piece entitled "Towards a Revolutionary Theatre," for example, urges one which will break with contemporary theatrical traditions and "draw its life and ideas from the conscious sections of the industrial and white collar working classes which are out to get control of the great flabby mass of capitalist society and mould it to their purpose."<sup>7</sup> The 1930-31





overview for the New Republic envisions "The American Theatre" as necessarily "a transformer for the deep high-tension currents of history" (p. 175). In "an epoch of sudden and dangerous transition" in which "Industrial life is turning a corner and is either going to make the curve or smash up in the ditch" (p. 174), theatre as a mass art has to be a social force. To cope with the modern world it has to vividly and directly "express the side of the American mass myth that the musical comedies leave out" (p. 174). Designed "to mold the audience a little instead of everlastingly flattering it," such a theatre would facilitate the construction of a new order "in the shell of the old" (Idem.), using every technological means possible to formulate, explain, and justify this goal.

Printed literature hardly presented itself as a similar organ of direct contact between the mass and the individual member of the crowd. Nevertheless, there is a correlation between the tasks Dos Passos conceived for the dramatist and the writer of prose whom, starting with a 1928 "Statement of Belief," he began describing as a kind of second class historian of his age. As explained in the 1932 "Introduction" to the re-issued Three Soldiers, the prose author had to "deal with the raw structure of history now," and quickly, "before it stamps us out" (p. viii). The same preface described the writer as an "architect of history" (Idem.) who captured and made permanent the mind of one generation as expressed through its speech. From it the writer created "forms to set the mind of tomorrow's generation" (Idem.). This view clearly implied an infusion of artistic vitality which included a connection between art and desired social change. It did so even in





the problematic address Dos Passos prepared for the first American Writers' Congress in 1935. Four years earlier, a New Masses review of Michael Gold's 120 Million had found no conflict between an author's Communist Party affiliations and his function as a writer. In 1935, however, Dos Passos noted curtailment of the artist's intellectual freedom by intrusive political partisanship and elaborate leftist bureaucracies. Without designating any one culprit, Dos Passos was actually referring to the Communist Party. Through its manipulation of such causes as the Harlan County miners, Dos Passos found himself increasingly at odds with it and an imported dogma he considered inappropriate for U.S. society. Anticipating the subsequent direction of Dos Passos' thought, the paper for a congress planned as a show of unity against the dangers of war and Fascism addressed itself primarily to the new menace from the left. Yet its argument reasserted the impact that the writer could and must have in society: "At this particular moment in history, when machinery and institutions have so outgrown the ability of the mind to dominate them, we need bold and original thoughts more than ever. It is the business of writers to supply that thought." Comparing the author of stories and poems--writing that was still not collectively produced--to an isolated technician, Dos Passos went so far as to liken his relationship to society to that of an electrical engineer. Indeed, he continued, "The importance of a writer, as of a scientist, depends upon his ability to influence subsequent thought."<sup>8</sup>

A decade removed from the period that primarily concerns us here, the succinctly expressed writer's credo is tempered by new historical events and conclusions drawn from Dos Passos' social activism.



With the still emerging aesthetic of the early twenties the more mature outlook shares a consistency in emphasis. In a word, the times now required that the writer take full cognizance of them and that he seek to influence the life around him by shaping its thought. Such a perspective is apparent in Dos Passos' early prescription for American letters: "We need writing that shall be acid, with sharp edges on it, yeasty to leaven the lump of glucose that the combination of the ideals of the man in the swivel-chair with decayed puritanism has made of our national consciousness" (RRA, p. 131).

The most significant example of the acetic remedy was furnished by the novels of Pío Baroja. Other authors, including friends Lawson and Cummings, were to demonstrate the formal direction Dos Passos deemed necessary and desirable. Few at this time, however, seemed to evoke the same kind of functional considerations so much in line with Dos Passos' early ideological accommodations. The profiles Dos Passos etched of the Basque physician-bakery owner are, in fact, distinguished by the very characteristics Dos Passos felt indispensable to the writer's role. No doubt the American perceived that Baroja's situation approximated something of his own. In the 1920 essay which eventually appeared in Rosinante as "A Novelist of Revolution," Dos Passos referred to Baroja's recognition that his class background defined the nature of his task. Because of his communal isolation and lack of experience as a worker enslaved by the industrial machine, "the only part a man of the middle classes can play in the reorganization of society is destructive. . . . He can use the vast power of knowledge which training has given him only in one way. His great mission is to put the acid





test to existing institutions, and to strip the veils off them" (RRA, p. 93). A 1923 review of an inadequate translation of La busca provides an even more telling sketch. Having "scorned the pomp and rhetoric of the professional literary man," Baroja "felt intensely the restlessness and disruption of the world about him in which the middle classes, dazed and bloated by the tremendous power and riches a century's industrial growth had brought them, were already losing control. An era was speeding to a climax. The early twentieth century was to bring decisive and sublime events. In all this there was no time for urbanity or literary punctilio. Writing should be colloquial, sarcastic, acid. A novelist was an advance agent of revolution who measured out and described what was to be destroyed."<sup>9</sup>

In the broad sense, Dos Passos' own developing poetic of the 1920s envisions the writer laying the groundwork for revolution, even if that revolution's precise nature and the means for its realization were unarticulated. Much like Döblin, Dos Passos dissociated partisanship from his obligations as a writer and proved consistently reluctant to substitute new dogmas for old ones. But he still attempted to formulate a role which would admit the participation of the middle class writer in a society badly in need of reorganization. It is clear that Dos Passos, who very much hoped for the kind of changes which might bring about a humanitarian cooperative economy free from war and militarism,<sup>10</sup> took a dim view of writing isolated from the restlessness, disruption, and decisive events his own generation had either recently experienced or now observed in a transitional period. In the emotional 1920 letter so critical of the January Dial's genteel aesthetic pose, he submitted



1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the

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fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the

fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the

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that the conditions of life in the industrialized world and the impressionable state of "chaotic unleavened America" (14C, p. 280) urgently required the attention of writer and publisher alike. The spacefillers Dos Passos found on the Dial's precious printed pages at a moment "so on the brink of things" (Ibid., p. 281) revealed scant evidence of this "leavening" responsibility. Before very long it would materialize as his depiction and evaluation of the phenomena and movement of mass life, such as it displayed itself in urban, industrialized America.

Between the catalytic agent visible in Dos Passos' tentative reflections and the new humanizer and educator distinctly pictured by Döblin, there is an obvious distance. Beyond it, however, the respective adjustments of the writer's function share common ground. In both cases the attempts to interpret his place in a new age attributed to the writer a social function and a heightened responsibility. Whether translated constructively or destructively, the role provided for participation in shaping and developing mass life in a critical transitional period. Necessarily, the expanded function was to be directly transmitted through the writer's work. It too proved a compelling subject for Döblin and Dos Passos. Artistic purpose obviously derived its impetus from their non-aesthetic concerns; yet neither one ignored the formal preoccupations of the artistic innovators of their day. For Dos Passos and Döblin, however, the consciousness of inescapable and far-reaching accommodations in artistic content and its means of presentation arose from their fundamental bias toward the reconciliation and integration of art with public and society. Toward this end, art itself was to be redefined



and deeply immersed in the life of the times.

Not surprisingly, Dos Passos and Döblin noted the isolation of their own assessments of artistic creation from prevailing attitudes about literature. Dos Passos aspired toward an example he found in Baroja, "that vigorous emanation of life and events that for some reason people garner up and dessicate in libraries and call literature" he described in the 1924 "Building Lots" review (p. 37). Less hostile to the attachment of any "literary" designation, Döblin nevertheless regarded his work's fundamental conception as separate from much of the writing contemporary with it. Providing biographical details for the Berlin Academy of Arts in 1928, he offered, "ich habe meine literarischen Werke nie als Kunstwerke im heutigen Fachsinn betrachtet und sie so geschrieben, sondern als geistige Werke, die dem Leben dienten, welches geistiger Art ist" (B, p. 140). The explanation is consistent with the 1923 "Mehrfaches Kopfschütteln" assertion that art embrace the "horizon of the new world," "the impetus of this time" (p. 6), and the later Ulysses review's inclusions of the specific phenomena of modern mass experience, many of them already outlined in "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters." To serve life, indeed, even to give it the naturist direction ultimately advocated by Döblin, art had to absorb it fully. Such a recommendation is equally implicit in the task Dos Passos assigned American writers in "Off the Shoals" when he spoke of fusing "the soggy disjointed complexity of the industrial life about us into seething fluid of creation" (p. 98). Incorporation of the external world was to be achieved by both writers through particular accommodations in the internal structures of art. For Dos Passos and Döblin, however, the





deliberate alignment of art with life went even further. Art was not only to present and evaluate modern experience; it was once again to derive its roots and character from popular life. Furthermore, no less than the writer himself, his work was to be reconciled with a public whose existence now served as art's foundation.

Already apparent in the two author's dissatisfactions with the state of German and American writing, limited audience appeal and an isolation from much of the population were artistic weaknesses in need of attention. Regardless of the hostility sometimes aroused by their own dramatic and novelistic efforts among the bourgeoisie, neither Dos Passos nor Döblin advocated the kind of production which completely broke with their own class and addressed itself solely to the proletariat. On the other hand, artistic accessibility to a broad audience extending beyond the middle class most certainly figured among their priorities. Apropos of radio, for example, Döblin considered that its radius of action among anonymous, often unlettered listeners far exceeded that of the printed book and the stage. It therefore possessed a literary potential and offered writers the unique opportunity to explore literature's source, the living oral language. Just as important, it provided writers with the chance to reach the masses. In this last respect radio could serve as a means of bridging a lamentable gap presently existing between printed, "eigentlichen, schon überartistischen Literatur," the exclusive property of only a small segment of the population, and the great masses of the people.<sup>11</sup>

By Döblin's reckoning, this separation between literature and the public arose only partially from the illiteracy of the masses. It





had been perpetuated and augmented by the cultivation of literature by and for the Bürgertum. As was illustrated in our earlier discussion, Döblin frequently scored this tendency and its specific manifestations. Understandably then, he proved warmly responsive to examples of counter-vailing developments. Thus against the Hauptmann phenomenon, Döblin held up the model of Arno Holz. Unlike his more famous contemporary, Holz was uncelebrated at the age of sixty in 1922. In that same year marking the Hauptmann Jubilee, non-participant Döblin expressed his preference for Holz, the author of such programmatic works as Revolution der Lyrik (1899) and the innovative poem-cycle Phantasus (1899-99).

Having asserted that his writing was concerned with neither the Classical nor the Romantic, but the Modern world, Holz had accordingly sought his material from the metropolis. Moreover, he forged a poetry beyond rhyme and prose without traditional strophes, alliteration or assonance. In it the necessary rhythm was created by the tones of natural speech. Holz simultaneously urged a drama which drew upon the non-literary, living language. For these innovations, Döblin subsequently eulogized Holz in 1929 as the German writer who had introduced a necessary break with empty tradition and who had been the first to acknowledge the present and the Grossstadt. Holz had recognized "dass jede poetische Technik eng mit den Lebensverhältnissen der Nation verflochten ist; diese aber ändern sich und mit ihnen unterliegt die Technik dem historischen Wechsel der Dinge" (AzL, p. 136). He therefore furnished an important example to surviving younger writers. Döblin's address to the Prussian Academy of Arts shortly after Holz's death cited it as the urgently required "organische funktionelle Beziehung zwischen Volk und Literatur"



(AzL, p. 145).<sup>12</sup>

Obviously, such a connection would not guarantee that a work, however conceived, would reach outside the ranks of those traditionally forming the audiences for German literature and theatre. In a 1930 typescript on the "Selbstschändung des Bürgers," for example, Döblin pointedly noted that for all his designs, Piscator's popularity rested with the members of his own class, and it did so largely because of his expansion of the methods of bourgeois art (S, p. 256-257). Nevertheless, the adaptation of German writing to the exigencies of the times was essential to that new unity between art and a broad public required for art's revitalization. Döblin's aforementioned 1921 "Staat und Schriftsteller" address urging identification between the bourgeois writer's work and the newly active masses also observed that the time was fast approaching when writers would have to become "viel einfacher, verständlicher und darum lebensvoller als wir jetzt sind" (AzL, p. 57). That he sought to heed his own advice is apparent from his modern Volksbuch, Alexanderplatz, which culminated his work of the decade. It was quickly followed by a theatrical companion piece, the experimental Die Ehe, described by Döblin himself as a Volksstück and conceived for performances on worker stages as well as in theatres patronized by the bourgeoisie.<sup>13</sup>

As general prerequisites for the unity of art and the public, Döblin's simplicity, vigorousness, comprehensibility, and his organic functional relationship with the population are close to the criteria advanced by Dos Passos for a similar end. During the early twenties, the American recommended them most frequently in his theatre commentary.





With their social, political, and even moral rationale for the substance, form, and function of drama, and their push for radical experimentation, these early writings, like Dos Passos' first theatrical effort, The Garbage Man, have a direct relationship with the genesis of Manhattan Transfer. Landsberg, who has accurately noted this connection, has rightly called attention to Dos Passos' dramatic views as some of the most explicit evidence of his political and social opinions of the period (p. 107). Usually overlooked by Dos Passos' novelistic critics, they are as much a gauge of his orientation toward non-theatrical writing and a complement for his pronouncements on literature as they are the foundation of the "revolting" theatre he urged in 1927.

An opponent of literary drama, Dos Passos was convinced of theatre's character as a vital expression of communal life and group consciousness. Notable examples of its essential nature were presented to him by the Madrid theatre and, closer to home, the Yiddish stage of New York's Lower East Side. American theatre, dominated by "the point of view that plays must be regarded primarily as masterpieces of literary effort, fraught with the culture of a by-gone age," had not kept pace with the expansion of industrialism and the nature of popular life. Even so, legitimate raw material for the stage abounded everywhere. What was required was its shaping and fusion into "organized purposeful expression"<sup>14</sup> with a view toward neither literati nor intellectuals, but those citizens for whom burlesque shows, movies, and roller coaster rides at Coney Island now reflected both the spirit of their experience and that experience's outlet. For this reason, Dos Passos, whose theatrical priorities inclined toward the creation of a native American





theatre, sought and approved the dramatic exploitation of themes and situations familiar to this audience. Among them were included the flight from the small-town Midwest to New York in Lawson's Roger Bloomer and the American success myth in Dos Passos' own Garbage Man. In addition, the technical incorporation of the features and modes of jazz, burlesque, musical comedy, vaudeville, and the mass phenomena of advertising and radio were construed as direct and simple means of audience contact.<sup>15</sup> These prescriptions for theatre detailed, in fact, the kind of identification of art--despite Dos Passos' aversion to that term--with popular life and art's integration in the meaning and spirit of the times that occupied so central a role in his earliest literary criticism. As he maintained once again at the close of the twenties when considering the material potential of a writer's Lower East Side background, "Great literature can only be grown out of the loam of a rich and sprouting popular life."<sup>16</sup>

The liaison between art and popular life involved, on the one hand, capturing and interpreting the nature of that mass experience to which Dos Passos, like Döblin, devoted his non-literary attention. It also required the obliteration of artistic hierarchies rigidly endorsed by perpetrators of an outmoded aesthetic serving a limited segment of the population. Dos Passos, who noted a connection between "good breeding" and "respect for ART, in whatever aspect that puzzling divinity might show itself," lamented "the idiotic schism between High-brow and Lowbrow" which accounted for audience shock at innovative plays drawing on jazz and vaudeville expression. Döblin, whose drama criticism is equally revealing of his artistic orientation, was as

1. The first of these is the fact that the  
author has not only written the book but  
also illustrated it with his own drawings.

2. The second is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

3. The third is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

4. The fourth is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

5. The fifth is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
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is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
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10. The tenth is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

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is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

12. The twelfth is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

13. The thirteenth is the fact that the book  
is written in a very simple and easy-to-understand  
manner.

sharply critical of that outmoded "aesthetic" priority he described as "Eine feige und verlogene, humanistisch eingewickelte, warm vertrottelte Kritik"<sup>17</sup> as he was of the theatregoing public's predilection for unprovocative art works which flattered it. Furthermore, he deplored the sterile, unhealthy, and out-of-date attitude toward German literature as an array of outstanding performances which perpetuated its pronounced and fatal separation from the great masses of people neither included nor reached by it. In the necessary broadening of art's dimensions, for example, there was room for work which, if technically uneven, served the purpose of bringing "Blut, Mist, Gegenwart auf die Bühne."<sup>18</sup> This was precisely the task Döblin perceived in stylized Zeitstücke centered on the plight of the returning war veteran. Plays like Brecht's Trommeln in der Nacht (1923) and Toller's Hinkemann (1924) were held objectionable by the majority of critics and theatregoers because their audiences applied the aesthetic models of the past to new forms of feeling. These very plays found a champion in Döblin through their resolute grip on an urban postwar world. Such a world also vividly showed that art's expansion was significantly influenced by the impact of mass media and popular diversions upon everyday life. Like that of the metropolis, industrialism, and recent history, their pervasive effect could no longer be ignored.

An age which now imposed distinct readjustments in the role of the artist and his work had given rise to a host of related cultural phenomena central to popular experience. As accurate expressions of modern life's sense and spirit, these phenomena had particular implications for artistic representation. First the Futurists, then





their Cubist and Dadaist successors, had attempted to explore and demonstrate them by drawing the inspiration and even the components of their work from the specific physical materials of industrial civilization and a machine age. Projected as novels which confront an urban-industrial world, Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz are heavily indebted technically as well as conceptually to such forerunners.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, these novelistic efforts must be seen in conjunction with their authors' attention to the new mass phenomena.

Neither Dos Passos nor Döblin proved oblivious to the role of mechanical media and entertainment in popular experience. The broad appeal of movies, radio, baseball, football, prizefights, jazz dancing, burlesque, musical comedy, vaudeville, and even amusement parks as direct expressions of prevailing sensibilities, as escapism, as safety valves, and as reflections of the rhythm of life in "A century that has to snatch its hasty life furtively between time clock and alarm clock" was duly noted by Dos Passos. Having reported before the war on popular reviews featuring apache dancing and living pictures as well as on the sensational waxworks and early movies which constituted the "theatre" of the working class, Döblin took increased notice of their evolution in postwar Berlin. On Saturday evenings, for example, the movie houses became that space into which an urban proletariat crept from its uncomfortable, noisy factories and stifling little rooms to indulge in a cinematic opiate equivalent to pulp literature. It should be emphasized here that although elevated to artistic status by a massive influx of theatre luminaries and by the development of a domestic industry, and no longer associated exclusively with the working and





Lumpenproletariat, film in postwar Germany still retained something of its disreputable prewar character. Moreover, sexual exploitation films, nationalistic historical pageants, thrillers, and adventure serials dominated the screen, attracting far more of the moviegoing public than those works of F. W. Murnau, Carl Mayer, and Fritz Lang with which the period is now identified. Döblin's observations are directly related to this aspect of the film phenomenon. In a milieu where work and life were synonymous, a dronelike citizenry of petit bourgeois and proletarians vainly sought pleasure outside the movies in cabarets, cafés, and dancing. The singalongs of patrons and performers in cabarets like the Café Orient on Andreasplatz proved, as Linke Poot pointedly observed in "Die Moral der Schlager," that "Als Ochse kann man von Sebastian Bach allein nicht leben." For the poorer classes, the popular songs of the day they knew by heart--songs with banal lyrics like "Im Rausch der Nacht, eh' du's gedacht, wirst du bald schwach, dann gibst du nach" or "Wenn ein Herzchen Liebe fühlt, geh'n wir beide miteinanda, wo die Asta Nielsen spielt, Henny Porten und Max Landa"--were as evocative as they were temporary relief from such realities as inflation.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond their service as diversions, these phenomena distinctly shaped the physiognomy of the age. This was particularly true of film and radio. Both had drastically altered daily experience and traditional art forms. Dos Passos, who incorporated radio into his Garbage Man (1918-23; published 1925) as the voice of conformity and capitalist industrialism used to manipulate and rally the public, already recognized that it would be followed by "subsequent mechanical means of broadcasting entertainment and propaganda." Moreover, radio had made it



"unnecessary for people to move out of their pigeonholes in the evening."

Dos Passos and Döblin admitted the medium's strong competition in this sense with an outmoded theatre it now rendered superfluous.<sup>21</sup> Taking special notice of radio's broad sphere of action among listeners traditionally alienated from German literature, Döblin eventually proceeded to explore the literary potential of an acoustic medium he conceded was best suited for journalism and the most universal of arts, music. Two months before the publication of Alexanderplatz, he submitted that radio could bridge the gulf between German literature and the masses in essays, poetry, and dramas uniquely adapted or written to suit radio's properties. Not surprisingly, Döblin soon collaborated with his actor-musician-sometime writer brother Hugo and radio producer Max Bing. The result was an adaptation of the Berlin novel's Biberkopf narrative as a Hörspiel of the dialoguized Novelle variety.<sup>22</sup>

If radio, both actually and potentially, was a force with which to be reckoned, film, just beginning to emerge as the unique expression and art of our century, was much more so. No longer deniable as an integral part of milieu and daily experience, where even popular songs mentioned the Asta Nielsens and Henny Portens who dominated the silent screen, film had radically affected patterns of behavior and perception. A 1936 introduction to a collection of George Grosz's sketches by Dos Passos referred to the fact that along with display advertising, "movies, though they may dull the wits, certainly stimulate the eyes." Within the context of the preface, film figures as part of a twenty-five-year revolution in American visual habits which transformed a "wordminded" people into an "eyeminded one" prone to respond to paintings from a





visual rather than a literary point of view.<sup>23</sup> Among the general public, however, "eyemindedness" was largely the consequence of film. Its influence became so pervasive that cinema invaded the territory of the other arts.

The encroachment drew interest from Dos Passos and from Döblin. While complementary to one another, the two writers' responses were rather different in emphasis. For Dos Passos, movies had "made the theatre of the transparent fourth wall unnecessary and obsolete," thereby corroborating the need for dramatic reform which would break realism's stranglehold on theatre. Cinematic realism was such that the camera and screen were able to "transport the audience into circumstances, in the ordinary sense, real." Such realism could show "what people who have been there recognize as West Virginia." Döblin similarly remarked that the impressive and characteristic features of silent film--"Schöne Landschaften, scharfes übersichtliches Ablaufen der Faden, drängende Situationen"--could never be duplicated on stage. Doing so, however, he acknowledged film's responsibility for the very technical reforms Dos Passos advocated and for the heavy stress on visual and kinetic stage effects in the early twenties.<sup>24</sup>

Ironically, Döblin came to regret the same trend he had favored more than a decade earlier. In the years preceding the First World War, a Döblin interested in pantomime and dance had urged the performers' liberation of the play from the writer through such devices as the improvisation and mime so admirably employed by the Japanese. Even before his 1910 Sturm pronouncements against literary theatre, however, his first dramatic effort, a 1905 piece of anti-theatre entitled Lydia



und Mäxchen. Tiefe Verbeugung in einem Akt, illustrated the recommended emancipation on several levels. There, a dramatist's conventional fin de siècle Ritterstück principals as well as the properties physically and verbally assert their independence from the script. Indeed, they go so far as to assault each other and the playwright himself. Besieged by attacks from the stage and by threats from the audience below, the dramatist finally recognizes his own obsessions in these grotesque transformations. With its graphic annihilation of prevailing dramatic rules and conventions and its play upon creator-work-audience relationships, Döblin's parody of traditional theatre introduced a presentational style both visual and mimic. But by the early 1920s, Döblin, an advocate of mutual collaboration between playwright and performer, was regretting a new dominance of optics and kinetics on the stage.<sup>25</sup>

Under the reign of strong performers and technicians, the formerly necessary and understandable reaction against the literary domination and the author's corruption of the stage had been carried to extremes in the new decade. According to Döblin, theatre as the art of spectacle became so divorced from the text that entire plays were sometimes turned topsy-turvy. Döblin's drama criticism reveals him far from oblivious to the important physical procedures involved in theatre and often receptive to innovation in stage design. Yet when he saw these becoming a play's most characteristic features, as in the current tendency toward Entliterarisierung der Bühne, he considered that modern theatre's essential and necessary nature as a product by and for the intellect was perverted. In seeking the sources of this development,





Döblin singled out not only Reinhardt, with his penchant for opulence and lavish spectacle, or Tairoff, with his total release of performers from any textual constraints. He also attributed an equal share of the blame to film.<sup>26</sup>

Having elevated the eye as the dominant organ of appeal, the silent cinema was directly connected with the current theatrical preference for spectacle. With kinetics and optics emerging as the theatrically effective forces, the conquest of drama by film was sometimes a total one. This was clearly the case, for example, in a system using several stages simultaneously or near-simultaneously: the Simultanbühne developed by the prominent directing team of Rudolf Bernauer and Carl Meinhard at the Theater an der Königgrätzer Strasse. Their 1923 production of Kreislers Eckfenster, in which characters from E. T. A. Hoffmann's Kreisleriana served only as material for the staging, had set dramatic technique aside for "das erzählende Schaustück." Although Döblin considered that the narrative spectacle had its predecessor in the Shakespearean play of numerous short scenes and multiple settings, he viewed its more recent model in the narrative film drama. By offering multicolored rather than black and white reality, the theatrical version surpassed the cinematic, producing a kind of Überkino where numerous pictures dissolved into one another and stages appeared and vanished. While Döblin could appreciate the wonderful effects and arrangements en masse of the Kreislerbühne, he evinced concern for an almost exclusive visual appeal at the expense of the intellectual one.<sup>27</sup>

Cinematically inspired innovations like simultaneous stages did not inherently, of course, constitute grave threats to theatre. More-





over, Döblin did not deny film, particularly in its aspect as "die dramatische Bildererzählung" some strong and beneficial implications for the other arts.<sup>28</sup> Receptive to the infusion of vitality provided by the early Piscator stage's visual and cinematic effects, notably the use of scene placards and slide projection in the 1924 production of Paquet's Fahnen, Döblin subsequently incorporated a number of them into his own Ehe project. Even primitive film had a certain significance for Döblin in this respect. As early as 1910, the Sturm review "Antikritisches" had recommended that in staging their productions, theatre directors should learn from the lessons of film where the major characteristics were "Kürze und Gedrängtheit, Dramatik." A real danger to theatre, however, was posed by precisely that coupling of visual stimulation and dull-wittedness mentioned by Dos Passos apropos of movies in his 1936 introduction to Grosz's drawings. Popular film's influence upon drama was such that die Entliterarisierung der Bühne was often equivalent to die Kinoverblödung des Theaters. Döblin held playwrights themselves as accountable for this situation as the theatrical entrepreneurs who had treated dramatic writing so badly. Writers were guilty of making concessions in their work to the vogue for spectacle and, even worse, that greed for action nurtured in the public by a steady film diet of detectives, conflict, cat burglars, and airplane chases. According to Döblin, this dominant cinematic fare reflected the commercial motives of the industrial magnates and businessmen who had gained control of film production. It ultimately betokened the base instincts of the troubled early twenties he labeled as "fascistic."<sup>29</sup>

The association of film and profit was later to prove personally



problematic for Döblin during his California exile in the early 1940s. In the twenties, however, disappointment in the commercialization of film merely colored an assessment of its artistic potential and led him to conclude that the phenomenon seemed to be more classifiable "unter die Schnapssorten als unter die Kulturprodukte."<sup>30</sup> Regardless of this opinion, Döblin's interest in film was a strong one. Although we have hardly any documentation from the same period to substantiate such a claim for Dos Passos, this is not quite the case with Döblin. Its existence, moreover, reveals that the German's attitudes were ambivalent and probably affected by his own ventures into film writing.

On the evidence of a 1922 Berliner Börsen-Courier contribution to "Deutsche Dichter über den Film," Döblin seemed reluctant to designate film an art because of its overwhelmingly commercial character and the still primitive techniques of this chance product of modern technology. Urging those presently engaged in filmmaking to explore the full black and white potential of the two-dimensional screen, he also observed that the writer, whose instrument was language, had little to contribute to silent film.<sup>31</sup> With the advent of the talkies, Döblin publicly recanted this position.

The possibility of a new and important collaboration by writers in filmmaking was something Döblin admitted in 1930. Doubtless this concession was partially inspired by discussions with Emil Jannings, fresh from his work in the screen version of Heinrich Mann's Professor Unrat, Der blaue Engel, and now interested in the film potential of Alexanderplatz. At this time Döblin asserted the suitability of his novel for the screen in terms of cinematic reform. The work, he reasoned,





would appeal to a largely urban and proletarian filmgoing audience on the basis of its urban and proletarian subject matter; it would also bring much-needed social and cultural actuality to the screen.<sup>32</sup>

From this allegedly new interest materialized the 1931 Allianz-Tonfilm production directed by Piel Jutzi. It was misleadingly entitled Berlin Alexanderplatz. The film is actually a realistic adaptation of Biberkopf's underworld experiences serving largely as a vehicle for Heinrich George in the main role. But for occasional reliance on documentary-style shots and montage effects reminiscent of Walter Ruttmann's Berlin, die Symphonie einer Grossstadt (1927) which capture something of the city and the Alexanderplatz, little of the novel's urban and collective character is retained. Many of its reviewers were disappointed by the long-awaited finished product for precisely these reasons. Deeming the popular underworld drama a better than average diversion, they saw the film as a regrettable concession to producers' demands and public tastes. More important, it failed to realize the potential of Döblin's "cinematic" novel marked by montage and networks of associations. For this, Döblin was himself partially responsible. It was his and Hans Wilhelm's script which had been selected over the scenario of the young screenwriter Heinrich Oberländer. From all reports, Oberländer's project exploited the novel's cinematic character in more original and interesting ways.<sup>33</sup>

The first to be publicized, the 1930-31 venture into film was not without its predecessors. A parenthesis in the 1922 denial of rapport between silent film and the writer of literature acknowledged the failure of those who had attempted to write for film and had faced



industry's misgivings about elevating its product's intellectual quality. In all probability, the allusion has personal associations. Döblin himself authored two abortive screen treatments of the Dämonie of sensuality which were revisions and adaptations of an equally unsuccessful one-act play of 1908. Although it is difficult to date both projects precisely, they appear to precede the 1922 Börsen-Courier statements. Given the external evidence that one version was already completed by January 1921 (B, p. 116), it is not inconceivable that Döblin, like so many others, was attracted to cinema by the March 1920 release of Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari. Breaking the grip of realism on film, Wiene's work aroused the interest of many who were previously convinced that film and intelligence were irreconcilable.<sup>34</sup> Coincidentally, Döblin's early screenwriting reveals a concern with moving outside the confines of prevailing cinematic style and content.

To some extent Döblin's scenarios anticipate the "instinct" films of the early twenties to which Kracauer attributes an emphasis on "the surge of disorderly lusts and impulses of a chaotic world" and the partial legacy of Expressionism in cinema. In the fragment reproduced in 1930 by Die literarische Welt, a young European count, greedy for that life which so wearied his recently deceased father, journeys to the Arabian port of Jidda. There he becomes infatuated with Siddi, the foster daughter of Ben Ghaleb, a local potentate. Much to the count's despair, his courtship is rejected. As his unrequited passion becomes mixed with the desire for revenge, he loses all self-control and takes Siddi by force. Destruction follows for both the count and his victim. Having been delivered of the count's child within





the confines of the harem, Siddi is killed by her benefactor Ben Ghaleb; the count is slain while fleeing to the harbor. In Die geweihten Töchter, the film's other version, the count survives his victim, whose suicide is a consequence of the illegitimate birth. Here Döblin also presents the redemption of the erring count and his salvation from the powerful degenerative forces to which he had earlier succumbed. Moreover, somewhat in the manner of Döblin's four-act Die Nonnen von Kemnade (1920-23), the project introduces a cult of life-oriented nuns dedicated to the free expression of love as a means of eradicating the destructive temptations of sensuality.<sup>35</sup>

Valuable indices of Döblin's cinematic interest as well as antecedents of the associative and montage techniques figuring prominently in Alexanderplatz, the screen adaptations were apparently allied with some regard for the advancement of film per se. Döblin's early film preferences generally incline toward narrative cinema with theatrical overtones. Outside his own film efforts, the tendency is clearly indicated by his praise, for example, of the pre-Eisenstein Polikuschka (1922).<sup>36</sup> A screen treatment of a Tolstoy story and one of several films produced by the Mejrabpom-Russ company featuring members of the Moscow Art Theatre, it relied heavily on theatrical techniques. Like most of his contemporaries and many of the early German filmmakers, Döblin brought theatrical and literary perspectives to film. Correspondence from 1921 (B, pp. 116-117) to Efraim Frisch, editor of Der neue Merkur, clearly reveals the bias in Döblin's technical commentary about Die geweihten Töchter. It is even more evident in the introductory remarks for the scenario's partial Dreieck publication in 1924 (p. 22).





On the one hand, Döblin's preface claimed that his work overcame such current film weaknesses as disconnectedness in scenic succession, distracting flickering accompaniment to scene changes, intellectually limiting naturalism, and obtrusively used intertitles. On the other, his preliminary statements listed his major innovations. He had composed groups of scenes in the same sense as novel chapters and sections. His film's segments, each of which formed one part of the total action, were unified through the consistent presence of one or more of the principals. Scene changes were initiated by the blurring or disappearance of either milieu or a single representative of the action. New dimensions for the material were created by juxtapositions of naturalistic landscapes and interiors with an imaginary realm [for example, symbolic effects such as a chain of self-restraint binding the count's chest] set against a bare background. Finally, real and maximum optical expression was facilitated by the avoidance or absolutely minimal presence of printed words on the screen. Die geweihten Töchter, Döblin noted, used only two sentences and two headings throughout.

The expressed interest in escaping the limits of cinematic realism and in relying upon the image alone indicate that Döblin's efforts at screenwriting were undertaken with some consideration for the properties and potential of silent film. This is also apparent from the exploitation of alternated close-ups and long shots, the interplay of light and shadow, the flashbacks, and the cross-cutting obviously called for by the initial film projects. Given his 1910 Sturm appraisal of "Kürze und Gedrängtheit, Dramatik" as primitive film's dominant traits and the 1922 Börsen-Courier's recommendations



for further exploration of film's visual character, Döblin's attention to film form--as naïve as it now appears--should not strike us as unusual. Nevertheless, long before his unhappy experience under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in the alien atmosphere of the Hollywood studios (September 1940-41), Döblin displayed little affinity for screenwriting. His abilities lay more in recognizing film's far-reaching experiential and technical consequences.<sup>37</sup>

Much the same holds true for Dos Passos, whose brief 1934 participation in adapting Pierre Louÿ's "Spanish novel" La Femme et le pantin (1898) as The Devil is a Woman for Paramount and Joseph von Sternberg gave him scant satisfaction (BT, p. 237; 14C, pp. 437-445). The American's interest in the film phenomenon precedes Manhattan Transfer, but unlike Döblin, Dos Passos furnishes little evidence of its extent. In the retrospective commentary of "What Makes a Novelist," he implies the impact of Eisenstein's work, specifically, the Soviet filmmaker's development of D. W. Griffith's montage technique, upon his own "rapportage of New York" (p. 31). Dos Passos' late reflections on his early work, however, are sometimes vague and even inaccurate in their recourse to chronology. These traits are apparent in Manhattan Transfer's alleged Eisenstein connection, one which more properly belongs to U.S.A., in particular, to its "Newsreel" and "Camera Eye" sections.

Dos Passos' awareness of Soviet indebtedness to American film, a familiarity which in turn stimulated his own interest in Griffith, is actually the product of 1928 contacts with Pudovkin and Eisenstein during a visit to the U.S.S.R. Actual exposure to any Eisenstein film





is chronologically impossible before the completion of Manhattan Transfer. Its final manuscript was submitted to the publishers in May 1925 before Dos Passos departed for Europe. The novel appeared in print the following November. Eisenstein's first feature film, Strike, premiered in Leningrad in February 1925 and was released in the Moscow cinemas in April. Confined to Europe, its Western screenings were launched with its Paris premiere on March 28, 1925. Obviously, if Dos Passos were present at any of the European showings, it was only after his New York novel was in the publishers' hands. Potemkin, which premiered at the close of 1925, only reached Western screening rooms in 1926.<sup>38</sup>

A far more likely and possible cinematic stimulus for Dos Passos may have been provided by Manhatta (1921), a nine-minute experimental film by the still photographer Paul Strand and the painter Charles Sheeler. Anticipating the European city symphony films which came into vogue in the later twenties and thirties, this innovative American work relied on the simple and direct techniques subsequently associated with U.S. documentary film toward the middle of the next decade. Its name and some of its intertitles adapted from Walt Whitman's poem "Mannahatta," the Strand-Sheeler film expresses the city's unique pace, mood, and power by capturing Manhattan island's dominant aspects as a harbor and hub of commerce and transportation. Shots of such typical features as ferryboats disgorging commuters in lower Manhattan--an opening sequence not unlike Manhattan Transfer's "Ferryslip" prose poem which sets its lower Manhattan arrival before the turn of the century--as well as Wall Street's narrow canyons, silhouettes of



bridges and construction scaffolding, and smoke billowing forth from office tower chimneys, for example, produce compositions from the visual patterns New York itself created. A visually oriented Dos Passos, who painted and designed expressionist stage sets, would undoubtedly have responded with enthusiasm to them. Unfortunately, while acknowledging an acquaintance with Strand to G.-A. Astre (I, 167), who briefly but inaccurately proposes Manhattan (1922) [sic] as a possible source, Dos Passos was unable to recall the year in which he saw the film. Manhatta escaped general notice in its initial New York screenings when included as a short in the programming of several major theatres. It first achieved prominence when presented in Paris as part of a spectacular program of avant-garde art featuring, among other things, Apollinaire's poetry and Satie's music. In Europe during the spring and summer of 1923, Dos Passos spent some time among Paris-based artistic innovators and wound up painting sets for the June 17, 1923 premiere of Stravinsky's Noces in Paris. He may therefore have been present at the "Soirée du Coeur à la barbe" at the Théâtre Michel, rue des Mathurins, the sixth of July. Although it is not impossible that firsthand acquaintance with the film occurred during its New York re-release in the late twenties at a number of private gatherings and fledgling art cinemas, the internal evidence of "Ferryslip" weighs more heavily in favor of earlier exposure to the film.<sup>39</sup>

Under either set of circumstances, an interesting parallel exists for the relationship between Alexanderplatz and Walter Ruttmann's Berlin, die Symphonie einer Grossstadt (1927), the famous city symphony film probably seen by Döblin which exploits Russian-style montage. An



unexplored area of investigation, the cinematic and literary analogues for metropolitan expression in these four possibly interrelated works certainly merit space among the convergences of literature, painting, and film during the twenties and thirties. Since the subject amounts to a study in its own right, present discussion can only call attention to it in conjunction with the significance of the film phenomenon for Döblin and Dos Passos. In a variety of ways, that phenomenon was marked by the very qualities the two writers sought to invest in literature. Broad appeal, directness, and immediacy of expression were precisely those prerequisites for writing which confronted the new world and aligned itself with popular life and experience. They were also indispensable to the most popular literary genre, the novel.





### The Consequences for the Novel

To the international debate about the novel's obsolescence, an obsolescence viewed in its twentieth-century carry-over of nineteenth-century form and outlook, Döblin and Dos Passos bring many of the priorities each deduced for art as a whole. The interwar period's intensification of a literary preoccupation initiated before the close of the last century, the so-called "crisis of the novel" that is also symptomatic of the Modernist condition, finds the two writers embarking on a parallel course. Recent history, combined with collective and technological experience in a postwar, postrevolutionary period necessitated that the questions, "Wie sollen wir leben, wie sollen wir handeln?" (IN, p. 240) be answered together with the evolution of a purpose for "la vie de nos jours" (14C, p. 150). For writers who perceived these as challenges to be met and satisfactorily resolved on a broad scale, that other pressing question, "wie kann man heute dichten?" (AzL, p. 290), assumed a particular significance. Insofar as the novel was concerned, it required far-reaching accommodations to the new world. But the mere recording and reflection of the new realities of life were insufficient for the realization of these ends. The novel's integration in the age was to be as reconciliatory as the one envisaged by Döblin and Dos Passos for art in general. What was respectively grasped as the novel's "rebirth" and "survival" was directly dependent upon three radical changes in the genre: its new accessibility to those whose experience it must absorb, its assumption of humanizing and catalytic attributes, and its technical reconstruction.



From the outset marked differences must be acknowledged in the amount of specific critical attention the American and the German devote to the problem of the novel. With a head start over the younger Dos Passos, Döblin had already advocated a novelistic revolution between 1913-17 that anticipates some of the nouveau roman program proposed by Alain Robbe-Grillet.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Döblin's essays from the 1920s that are directly and indirectly related to the subject of the novel have no counterpart in the work of Dos Passos during the period under immediate consideration. Yet even before the maturation of those views most amply documented in post-Manhattan Transfer periodical contributions, Dos Passos unmistakably displays his attachment to novelistic reform. The tentative and embryonic quality that stamps his approach to the age's physiognomy is equally evident here and therefore prohibits discussion of his views in terms of a uniform and systematic poetic of the novel. Despite such qualifications, Dos Passos' sentiments are valuable proof of his dynamic apprehension of the demands now imposed on the genre. They shed light on those steadily evolving insights that eventually crystallized into succinct statements of purpose.

For all its apparent extensiveness, Döblin's novel commentary of essays, book reviews, questionnaire responses, and epilogues is also best regarded from the vantage point of a non-static, progressive development. Moreover, like that of Dos Passos, Döblin's essentially open-ended and fluid interpretation of the novel's adaptation to new exigencies also bears the impress of artistic corroboration from a number of sources. It is therefore important to recognize the existence of such traces in those of Döblin's explanations that appear to derive from a single impetus, his own. In this case, confrontation with the





evidence provided by Döblin becomes predictably problematic, a feature only underscored by the example of interpreters seeking single causes for Döblin's production. If unanimity is missing in this area, critical opinion also varies concerning the applicability of the terms "theory" or "poetic" to that portion of Döblin's oeuvre taken up with the novel. Disaccord exists on two other fronts as well: the fundamental consistency of those ideas dominating the major pieces of pre-exile, pre-conversion commentary, and the understanding of Döblin's use of generic classifications, especially those he employed as antitheses. Despite their disharmony, observers tend to concede an ambiguity and lack of terminological clarity on Döblin's part and to recognize unmistakable examples of self-contradiction in his pronouncements.<sup>41</sup> Since the present study admits of contradictions and ambiguity as inherent in the Modernist predicament represented by Döblin and Dos Passos, no attempt will be made here to resolve them. The consequences for the novel seized upon by both writers are seen instead to manifest many of the same traits that distinguish the interrelated search for artistic and ideological coherence.

In the course of its development, this specific manifestation of artistic accommodation never abandons the possibility of novel-writing per se. Prevailing opinions to the contrary, Dos Passos, as he retrospectively confessed in "What Makes a Novelist?," had "refused to believe the novel was dying" (p. 29). Any refusal on his part consisted of denying only the genteel and pallid American species noted for its stale conquests of form, its plethora of "vague grand ideas" (RRA, p. 131), and its complete divorce from the meaning and expression



of modern experience. For Döblin, rejection of the novel was essentially a repudiation of legitimacy for that uniquely German metamorphosis of the Roman. To his way of thinking, a non-genre marked by an aphoristic essayistic character and noted for its reliance upon eroticism, suspense, and psychologism lacked any artistic affiliations whatsoever. Association with backward-looking Bürgerlichkeit and a world long since vanished only heightened its archaic nature.<sup>42</sup> More than anything else, the possibility of novel-writing in the U.S. and Germany was now determined by the extent of the genre's liberation from the shackles of the past. It was only too obvious to both Dos Passos and Döblin what the novel could no longer be. The task at hand involved comprehension and realization of what it might become.

To a certain degree, impediments to freedom were already present in traditional classification. Awareness of such restrictions is apparent in the reluctance of Döblin and Dos Passos to value the designation "novel," a reluctance that allies itself at different stages in their careers with a preference for alternate terminology. Viewed broadly, this tendency is part of a mutual assertion of independence from a rigid hierarchy of outmoded forms, their attendant conventions, and the expectations they aroused. Throughout the two writers' heterogeneous production, even outside the realm of fiction in unconventional autobiography and unorthodox dramatic and literary criticism, this attitude is exhibited. It colors receptivity to the merits of diverse types of writing and to mixed modes frequently held in disregard.

Illustrations of shared inclinations are numerous. Among the most obvious are Dos Passos' Harvard enthusiasms for that American "near-





literature" of "half newspaper report and half personal narrative" offered by John Reed's Insurgent Mexico and The War in Eastern Europe, and the interests in burlesque, farce and vaudeville cited earlier. These examples find parallels in Döblin's favorable reactions to the postwar Zeitstücke and in his response to Fahnen--a treatment of the 1886 Chicago anarchist insurrection--as Drama-Novel or an intermediary mixed form capable of reanimating a moribund German stage. In conjunction with a desire for theatrical reform, this push for emancipation is no doubt responsible for the attachment of the subtitle A Parade with Shouting to Dos Passos' Garbage Man. Its analogue can be found in Döblin's initial theatrical venture with the unique appendage Tiefe Verbeugung in einem Akt. As Horst Denkler has aptly remarked, Lydia und Mäxchen's programmatic epigram--"Bei verdorbenem Magen wirkt / Salat oft in jeder Form erfreulich / (Eigene Beobachtung)" (LM, p. 12)--accurately foreshadows the anti-play's saladlike remedy for a German drama corrupted by traditionally preserved forms and structures. More conventional in nature, Drei Szenen and Drei Szenen und ein Vorspiel, the respective accompaniments for Döblin's Lusitania (1920) and Ehe (1930) efforts, should none the less be regarded as modifications of the earlier disclaimer of affinities with conventional plays.<sup>43</sup>

Similar distinctions between the novel's current state and its projected transformation account for the dissatisfaction with customary nomenclature experienced by Dos Passos and Döblin. Because of the associations evoked by the quasi-prescriptive term "novel," the designation was, in a sense, inadequate for the more expansive work each came to envisage. In degree and scope their specific reactions are





noticeably different. Beneath their particulars, however, the responses reveal a number of important fundamental similarities.

With its statement that Cummings' Enormous Room, a fictional transposition of its author's internment at La Ferté-Macé detention camp, had "been conceived unashamedly and directly without a thought . . . of fitting into any of the neatly labelled pigeonholes of novel, play, essay, history, [or] travel book," Dos Passos' favorable "Off the Shoals" review (p. 98) already implicates the deficiencies of terminology. What might first appear as casual disregard for convention or a simple assertion of individualism is far more than that. It actually reflects Dos Passos' attitude toward the limits imposed by traditional categories at a time when the novel needed to assume wider dimensions by embracing and fusing together into coherent form industrial life's "soggy disjointed complexity" (p. 90). Several decades later Dos Passos elaborated upon his early discontent. In a 1960 speech delivered at Minnesota's Carleton College, he admitted to longstanding personal difficulties in the classification of his books according to the publishers' two arbitrary divisions of fiction or nonfiction. Although lacking in precision, the 1960 usage of the two divisions does not appear to be substantially different in nature from the 1922 equation of "fiction" with writing which avoided the necessary encounters with the world outside it. "Off the Shoals," for example, specifically charges writers too timid "to make any attempt to feel and express directly the life about them and in them" with self-insulation through "the rubber raincoat of fiction" (p. 98). Having long ago rejected the equivalence of "novel" with this retreat into "fiction" or escapism



then, the sixty-four-year-old Dos Passos claimed to have found a happy balance in "contemporary chronicles." It was, he remarked, a suitable appellation for the kind of novel that had occupied him since Three Soldiers, a work whose impetus stemmed from the desire to document the present and register a protest against some of its features. Upon receiving the Feltrinelli Award from Galileo's Academy of Lynxes in 1968, Dos Passos more specifically explained that the series of novels he now called the Contemporary Chronicles "began to take final form in the Thirties." They were sparked, however, by experiences dating "back to the years of the European War of 1914-18."<sup>44</sup>

"Contemporary" through their attachment to recent history and twentieth-century experience, the "chronicles" were also allied with a particular past. Both the 1960 Carleton College commentary and the only slightly revised version that forms the Rome address establish an ancestry for Dos Passos' works. It includes Vanity Fair, La Chartreuse de Parme, and War and Peace, those "chronicle novels" wherein "the story is the skeleton on which some slice of history is brought back to life. Personal adventures illustrate the development of society. Historical forces take the place of the Olympians of ancient Greek theater."<sup>45</sup> By thus linking his own efforts up with examples of an earlier tradition which firmly engaged the novel in the broad presentation and coherent interpretation of its time, Dos Passos plainly exhibits the furthest evolution in his integration between the novel and the world outside it. That this preoccupation was subject to marked shifts in emphasis as Dos Passos matured is obvious. The changes parallel the adjustments in socio-political perspective traceable among the formally





disparate works from U.S.A. onwards, that is, the works to which the "Contemporary Chronicles" designation most particularly applies.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the shifts in emphasis are clearly present in "What Makes a Novelist," where as in all the retrospective recantations of earlier excesses and errors, Dos Passos plays down the degree to which he previously allowed novelistic engagement to include a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between art and milieu. On the whole, however, the descriptive precision attained late in life is a useful gauge of the general inclination from which Dos Passos did not essentially deviate. Whereas the author of Manhattan Transfer had yet to conceive of the novel in exactly these world-embracing terms, he was nevertheless en route toward their articulation.

In contrast to the chronological discrepancy between Dos Passos' fully developed terminological distinctions and the writing of his New York novel, Döblin's differentiation between the novel in its present state and future translation precedes and coincides with the production of Alexanderplatz. Repudiating the nineteenth-century metamorphosis of the German novel, Döblin introduced the antithesis "Roman" and "modernes Epos" (AzL, p. 19) in the 1913 "Berliner Programm" and subsequently relied on the frequent opposition between novel and "episches Werk," "episches Wortkunstwerk," and "episches Kunstwerk" until 1929. As has already been noted, critical readers of Döblin's "theoretical" writings on the novel generally concur that this antithesis is not consistently maintained, that it often lacks terminological clarity, and that Roman is not without positive value in the essays.<sup>47</sup> In actuality it is only in "Der Bau des epischen Werks," initially

The first of these is the fact that the...  
The second is the fact that the...  
The third is the fact that the...  
The fourth is the fact that the...  
The fifth is the fact that the...  
The sixth is the fact that the...  
The seventh is the fact that the...  
The eighth is the fact that the...  
The ninth is the fact that the...  
The tenth is the fact that the...  
The eleventh is the fact that the...  
The twelfth is the fact that the...  
The thirteenth is the fact that the...  
The fourteenth is the fact that the...  
The fifteenth is the fact that the...  
The sixteenth is the fact that the...  
The seventeenth is the fact that the...  
The eighteenth is the fact that the...  
The nineteenth is the fact that the...  
The twentieth is the fact that the...  
The twenty-first is the fact that the...  
The twenty-second is the fact that the...  
The twenty-third is the fact that the...  
The twenty-fourth is the fact that the...  
The twenty-fifth is the fact that the...  
The twenty-sixth is the fact that the...  
The twenty-seventh is the fact that the...  
The twenty-eighth is the fact that the...  
The twenty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The thirtieth is the fact that the...  
The thirty-first is the fact that the...  
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The thirty-third is the fact that the...  
The thirty-fourth is the fact that the...  
The thirty-fifth is the fact that the...  
The thirty-sixth is the fact that the...  
The thirty-seventh is the fact that the...  
The thirty-eighth is the fact that the...  
The thirty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The fortieth is the fact that the...  
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The forty-second is the fact that the...  
The forty-third is the fact that the...  
The forty-fourth is the fact that the...  
The forty-fifth is the fact that the...  
The forty-sixth is the fact that the...  
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The forty-eighth is the fact that the...  
The forty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The fiftieth is the fact that the...  
The fifty-first is the fact that the...  
The fifty-second is the fact that the...  
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The fifty-fifth is the fact that the...  
The fifty-sixth is the fact that the...  
The fifty-seventh is the fact that the...  
The fifty-eighth is the fact that the...  
The fifty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The sixtieth is the fact that the...  
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The sixty-second is the fact that the...  
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The sixty-fourth is the fact that the...  
The sixty-fifth is the fact that the...  
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The sixty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The seventieth is the fact that the...  
The seventy-first is the fact that the...  
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The seventy-fourth is the fact that the...  
The seventy-fifth is the fact that the...  
The seventy-sixth is the fact that the...  
The seventy-seventh is the fact that the...  
The seventy-eighth is the fact that the...  
The seventy-ninth is the fact that the...  
The eightieth is the fact that the...  
The eighty-first is the fact that the...  
The eighty-second is the fact that the...  
The eighty-third is the fact that the...  
The eighty-fourth is the fact that the...  
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The eighty-seventh is the fact that the...  
The eighty-eighth is the fact that the...  
The eighty-ninth is the fact that the...  
The ninetieth is the fact that the...  
The ninety-first is the fact that the...  
The ninety-second is the fact that the...  
The ninety-third is the fact that the...  
The ninety-fourth is the fact that the...  
The ninety-fifth is the fact that the...  
The ninety-sixth is the fact that the...  
The ninety-seventh is the fact that the...  
The ninety-eighth is the fact that the...  
The ninety-ninth is the fact that the...  
The hundredth is the fact that the...

delivered at the University of Berlin in December 1928 and Döblin's most elaborate statement of the decade, that he gave himself over completely to the use of "epic work." Doing so, he offered no a priori principles but rather generalized from the procedures undertaken in the current Alexanderplatz project to elucidate his conception of a literary species he considered still in the process of formation. In the 1930-31 Czech interview about Alexanderplatz, Döblin used the "epic" designation as a means of setting his own work apart from the alleged sources of influence, Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer. In essence he was attempting to underscore what he considered his work's unique function. Outside this contribution to the influence controversy and earlier "theoretical" pronouncements, however, Döblin reveals that he had not severed all ties with the "novel." His correspondence, reviews, and other periodical contributions from the 1920s, including 1928 questionnaire responses distinctly referring to Alexanderplatz as work in progress, continue to speak of the writing of "novels" and to apply the term Roman to his activities.<sup>48</sup>

For the most part "novel" denotes that disavowed breed which Döblin had already censured between 1913-17 in the "Berliner Programm," "Bemerkungen zum Roman," and "Über Roman und Prosa," and which he discussed further in the 1919 "Reform des Romans."<sup>49</sup> Its condemnation continued in the twenties, as is obvious from the "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung" address to the Berlin Academy of Arts (March 1928) and its description of the novel as "besonders in unserer Zeit ein hochkomisches und lächerliches Produkt" (AzL, p. 92). These Bildungsromane, pseudo-biographies, historical novels, and "schauerlichen Romane der





naturalistischen Zeit" (AzL, p. 93) designed to entertain, instruct, agitate, or criticize presented unfair competition with science, ethnography, geography, or ethics. Although held by their public and authors alike to embody the essence of literature, they really epitomized "illegale Wissenschaft oder illegale Politik oder illegale Ethik" but bore no resemblance whatsoever to "legale Kunst" (AzL, p. 93). By comparison, "epic work," which gained most favored classification status in the late 1920s, forms a positive corrective freed from the "novelistic" associations of which Döblin so severely disapproved. In this respect Döblin's substitution of "epic work" for "novel" parallels that usage of "epic theatre" which his friend Brecht found so convenient as a contrast for the "dramatic" variety toward the latter twenties.<sup>50</sup>

The "epic work" is essentially the equivalent of a thoroughly reformed and artistic novel, as both Karl Blessing (p. 8) and Jacob Erhardt (p. 36) have sensibly pointed out. In no way does the term's particular usage imply a postulated return to archaic modes whose resurrection Döblin considered neither possible nor desirable. From the start, in the polemical "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker," he established apropos of technique that "der Künstler kann nicht mehr zu Cervantes fliehen, ohne von den Motten gefressen zu werden" (AzL, p. 15). If he was to subsequently relax his prohibitions against the exploitation of traditional techniques, however, Döblin did not do so believing that they recreated old forms. As late as 1928, the Ulysses review specifically implied that modern experience was antithetical to that which formed the basis of ancient epic. Hence Döblin proclaimed that "Joyce beziehungsweise der Ulysses demonstriert nämlich die





Unmöglichkeit eines heutigen Homer" (AzL, p. 287). Like the frequently cited and disparate examples of "epic" achievement,<sup>51</sup> such luminaries from world literature as Homer, Cervantes, and Dostoevsky who were sure to be familiar to Döblin's audience, "epic work" signifies desirable and necessary artistic features. In the writings on the novel, the fundamental dichotomy is less an opposition of "episches Werk" and "Roman" than a juxtaposition of the former's positive traits with the negative qualities of a hopelessly outmoded, unartistic novel.

Like Dos Passos' eventual recourse to genealogy and the "contemporary chronicle," the species outlined by Döblin toward the late twenties is based on artistic priorities that are reconciliatory and integrating in nature. Owing to the peculiar character of the German novel, one of its fundamental reconciliations was to be with art. That imperative had already been established in Döblin's prewar advocacy of a genre free of authorial intrusions through interventions from a personal narrator given to psychological analysis of character and abstract reflections. Severed from its traditional ties to philosophy and erudition, Döblin's nouveau roman was to directly, objectively, and sensually portray life as experienced through its concrete phenomena, that "entseelte Realität" (AzL, p. 17) which formed the novel's true subject. The specific revolution in novelistic prose that is the core of Döblin's early program calls for unadorned, concise expression, a language in which "Der Prosaautor presst soviel Gegenständlichkeit aus seinem Material, den Worten, als das Material hergibt."<sup>52</sup> In the postwar expansion of the campaign for a new novel, stylistic innovations as well as affirmations of the novel as Kunstwerk continue



to occupy important roles. Yet on the whole, Döblin's pursuit of the "epic work" embraces much broader reconciliatory attributes.

While the 1913 "Berliner Programm" had acknowledged that "Die Welt ist in die Tiefe und Breite gewachsen" (AzL, p. 15), and a novel like Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun, despite its remote temporal and geographic setting, had already testified to the collective character of modern experience, Döblin's novel commentary does not mention the nature of change and growth until the postwar, postrevolutionary period. Earlier statements on the novel tended to reject its emphasis on individual existence primarily in terms of the stylistic and psychological excesses perpetrated by its authors in their pursuit of "gedichtete Psychologie" (AzL, p. 21). Postwar pronouncements re-echo some of the previous exasperation, as is obvious from the 1923 "Mehrfaches Kopfschütteln" inspired by an anonymous example of the impossible, hopelessly out-of-date genre centered on individual existence. Beyond such exclamations as "Ein Warkenkatalog, ein Preiskurant ist mir interressanter als das angebliche 'Leben' von zirka dreissig Menschen" (p. 5) and the reiteration of old grievances, however, Döblin provides a glimpse of his more recent extra-artistic insights. Admittedly, it is from the perspective of a non-Freudian neurologist holding psychological disorders to be physiological in origin that Döblin denies validity to the vogue for subjective interior fiction concentrating on the problems of the self. At the same time, the emphasis and subject matter of this kind of writing are countered by the new implications of modern experience: "gibt es gar kein Individual-Ich, sondern nur eine Gruppenseele mit Partialnuancen" (Idem.). Immersions, so to speak,





in old inkwells substituting for the plunge "hinein ins volle Menschenleben" (Idem.), novels of this type were little more than transmissions of literary schemata and clichés passing for human life. They were now wholly incongruous with what only too clearly appeared on the horizon, for as Döblin declared, "Wir stehen vor einer Wende des Denkens" (p. 6). Such observations establish visible links between the novel and the human, social, and spiritual potential of an industrial-technological and "naturalistic" age which shortly thereafter drew Döblin's attention in "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters." In fact, Döblin's apprehension of a new novel ultimately endows it with a totality of function that takes this potential into account through a multilayered representation of reality.

To meet the challenge of the age, the novel required an engagement with the broad new collectivity Döblin described elsewhere in his socio-political and naturist writings. This in turn necessitated a new relationship between the novelist and the collective life of which he formed a part. Keenly aware of the individualistic nature of the means of present-day artistic production, Döblin nevertheless attempted to reconcile individualism and collectivity so that they were not mutually exclusive. To some extent he resolved the problem more successfully than in his non-artistic considerations. By simply undertaking to write, the author, in a sense, voluntarily joined with the collective:

Er geht zwar auch nicht wie der alte Vagant und Fabulierer unter das Volk und singt, was sie ihm zutragen, und richtet sich nach ihren Wünschen. Aber der Autor trägt von diesem Augenblick an das Volk in sich.

Jenes beobachtende Ich übernimmt in unserer Zeit die Rolle



und Funktion des Volkes bei jenen alten Vaganten. Das Ich wird Publikum, wird Zuhörer, und zwar mitarbeitender Zuhörer. (Ich warne vor der Verwechslung mit Goethes "idealen Zuhörer.") Es findet von diesem Augenblick an eine Kooperative, ein Zusammenarbeiten zwischen dem Ich und der dichtenden Instanz statt. Dauernd steht dieses aufmerkende, denkende und wertende Ich im Zusammenhang mit der dichtenden Instanz, stachelt sie an, treibt sie zurück, ernährt oder führt sie gut oder schlecht, wirkt regulatorisch. So ist beim epischen Autor keine Rede . . . von einem blinden fessellosen Trieb, einer Bewusstlosigkeit, die dichtet. Bewusstlos ist nur das Inkubationsstadium, in eigentümlicher Weise aber bewusst, gedankengetränkt, mit Werten des ganzen Milieus, des Standes, der Klasse, der Volksschicht, des Volkstums durchsetzt das zweite Stadium. Und all diese Dinge, Gedanken, Werte der genannten Umwelt formen nun in ringender Kollektivarbeit mit der dichtenden, sehr persönlichen Instanz das Werk (AzL, pp. 120-121).

Part of the text of "Der Bau des epischen Werks," this explanation is couched in language distinctly different from the variety employed in the decade's unequivocal utterances about the dynamic interrelationship of author, literature, and the broad masses based on the new social responsibilities of German writers. In spite of this difference, such commentary on the epic work must be viewed as a response to those interconnected social and artistic priorities Döblin ascertained at the war's close, priorities which, irrespective of shifts in emphasis, he continued to affirm at the end of the new decade.<sup>53</sup> Representative of the direction taken by Döblin's thinking in the latter twenties around the time of his increasing estrangement from writers on the revolutionary left, his reflections on the epic work show the same tendency toward generalization and abstraction that underlies the embrace of an untenable non-materialist socialism and ahistorical, quasi-mystical naturism. Those accommodations were conceived to meet the social and spiritual exigencies of the only apparently materialist, technological age; the novel's endowment with a broadly reconciliatory "epic" character was

1870-1871. The first year of the war, the Union army was victorious in the Battle of Antietam, which stopped the Confederate advance into Maryland.

The war was a turning point in American history. It led to the abolition of slavery and the strengthening of the Union. The Union army was victorious in the Battle of Antietam, which stopped the Confederate advance into Maryland. The war was a turning point in American history. It led to the abolition of slavery and the strengthening of the Union.

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to satisfy that age's artistic needs.

Determining precisely how the novel could fulfill its new role ultimately proved far more pressing a preoccupation for both Döblin and Dos Passos than the conferring of new or substitute designations. Confrontation with a world of drastically altered relationships between man and milieu obviously required radical changes in the ways of presenting new subject matter. Despite variations in their particular grasp of the age's physiognomy, the two writers agree on its incorporation as the novel's raw material and on the importance of its representation in as direct a manner as possible. To be "reborn" as the "epic work" or simply to "survive" under its old name, the novel had to appropriate those formal qualities expressive of the life it internalized and interpreted. As Dos Passos was to declare later in 1927, "The day of the frail artistic enterprise, keeping alive through its own exquisiteness, has passed. A play or a book or a picture has got to have bulk, toughness and violence to survive in the dense clanging traffic of twentieth century life." Döblin was no less adamant about the requisite adaptation of the novel and of all literary genres, for that matter: "Die sprechende Kunst oder Wortkunst ohne den Horizont der neuen Welt, ohne den Impetus dieser Zeit, ohne Schärfe, Härte, Geistigkeit ist Spielerei."<sup>54</sup>

Consistent with the similar approach to style favored by Dos Passos and Döblin, the technical consequences each extracted from the "traffic of twentieth century life," the "horizon of the new world," and the "impetus of this time" were to serve not as ends in themselves but as indispensable agents of integration and reconciliation. Advocates of





technical functionalism, neither Döblin nor Dos Passos favored rigidly formulaic innovation. Their advancement of change in this area is as flexible as their apprehension of the novel's expanding role. Convinced that it was first essential to "get off the sticky shoals into the deeper reaches beyond,"<sup>55</sup> Dos Passos is the less specific of the two with regard to formal criteria. Döblin, a longtime opponent of the suspense-ridden "erzählten Dramen auf dem Papier" (AzL, p. 20) that passed for novels, did elaborate internal structural principles. To counter the A-Z linear development adhered to in novels relying on action and suspense as its mainstays, he proposed something quite different. Like an earthworm, the novel, he averred in the 1917 "Bemerkungen zum Roman," should be able to be cut up in ten pieces, each piece capable of moving by itself (AzL, p. 21). Such observations are no doubt connected with Döblin's own procedures. In a 1928 survey response which specifically referred to Alexanderplatz, for example, Döblin admitted that his writing was not initiated with a complete conception in miniature but advanced in stages, so to speak, by a method of apposition. Drawing upon his current project, he offered: "Etwa in meinem Roman jetzt aus Berlin weiss ich zünachst nur: der Mann will aus dem Tegeler Gefängnis nach Berlin; also dann fährt er eben hin; was sich dann ergibt,--dazu bedarf es weiterer Einfälle, die wiederum eine Zeit weiter tragen. Es gibt dann Einfälle von besonderer Fruchtbarkeit, aber im ganzen hat man sich durch einen Roman Schritt um Schritt durchzuschlagen und darf sich die Frische nicht durch vorwitzig vorweggenommene Situationen und Einfälle verderben lassen."<sup>56</sup>

While he did not reiterate the earthworm analogy in the latter



1920s, Döblin continued in both "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung" and "Der Bau des epischen Werks" to propound an appositive structure and to maintain his resistance to the suspenseful dramatization of the novel. In conjunction with both, however, he now put forward the distinguishing feature of "unbegrenzt Form" (AzL, pp. 124-125). It facilitated exploration of situations and characters in a distinctly open-ended "epic" manner. An unbounded, fluid nature was also the sign of an evolving species, for, as Döblin explained, "Das epische Kunstwerk ist keine feste Form, sie ist wie das Drama ständig zu entwickeln und zwar durchweg im Widerstand gegen die Tradition und ihre Vertreter" (AzL, p. 112). This kind of freedom also extended to the technical means at the writer's disposal for the presentation of his subject matter: "Ich möchte wider und wieder die Autoren anrufen, nicht der Form, welcher auch immer zu dienen, sondern sich ihrer zu bedienen. . . . Ich fordere auf, die epische Form zu einer ganz freien zu machen, damit der Autor allen Darstellungsmöglichkeiten, nach denen sein Stoff verlangt, folgen kann. Wenn sein Sujet gewillt ist, lyrisch zu tanzen, so muss er es lyrisch tanzen lassen" (AzL, p. 115). By thus allowing the subject to "dance lyrically if it were so inclined," Döblin urged precisely that cohesion of technique and material acknowledged by Dos Passos in his refutation of the critical division "between a subject and the way it is treated." Relying on somewhat more earthbound imagery, the American argued that "A novel is an indissoluble entity made up of as many layers as an onion. The style of an onion is its layers. By the time you've peeled off all the layers there's no onion left."<sup>57</sup>





Even as they spoke of indissolubility, however, Dos Passos and Döblin specifically considered the "layers" which endowed the "onion" with its shape, substance, and unique character. Not surprisingly, both held the formative features to be linguistic in nature. To a great extent revitalizing the novel meant vitalizing its language, and linguistic change was the prerequisite for forging firm new bonds between the novel and its surroundings. For Dos Passos, the linguistic priority is almost always the central focus. It reveals itself, for example, in the lessons of Spain where the poetry of Machado and Maragall displays an "enthusiasm for the rhythms of ordinary speech" (RRA, p. 147) and "a language that has not lost its earthy freshness by mauling and softening at the hands of literary generations" (Ibid., p. 169). Strong popular roots were equally evident in the novels of Baroja. These were "written in a language wilfully casual and unliterary," "full of slang and racy talk."<sup>58</sup> Significantly, in the "Off the Shoals" review, when Dos Passos directed his attention to a commendable American novel, The Enormous Room, no small portion of praise was heaped upon its author's exploitation of "the rhythms of our American speech as the material of his prose" (p. 99). Although he described Cummings' achievement as "writing created in the ear and lips and jotted down" (Idem.), Dos Passos' receptivity is not necessarily to the exactness of duplication but to the direct expressiveness of such language. Impressed by Cummings' "accuracy in noting the halting cadences of talk" (Idem.), Dos Passos also responds to the ability to make music of such talk. He is enthused about the indelible vividness "of a mode, nearer [emphasis added] the conventions of speech than those of books, in a



style infinitely swift and crisply flexible" (p. 100).

Contact with the living spoken language is a requirement seconded by Döblin in general literary terms only at the end of September 1929 shortly before the publication of Alexanderplatz. In his "Literatur und Rundfunk" comments Döblin stressed the lamentable separation between an already excessively artistic literature, the exclusive property of one small segment of the population, and the broad masses. However, the gap could be bridged. An ailing literature could be restored to health by the transformation of Schriftsteller into Sprachsteller, specifically by incorporating and reaching the Volksmasse in essays, poetry, and dramas uniquely adapted or written for radio (pp. 313-314). Such advice is probably colored by an interest in the radio potential of the recently completed Alexanderplatz as well as by the liaison the novel established with varieties of vernacular German. That Berlin itself in association with the living spoken language had long absorbed Döblin, however, is only too apparent from the Sturm pieces, the postwar Linke Poot glosses, and the Prager Tagblatt theatre reviews. Obviously related to his defense of the Zeitstücke and his aversion to Hauptmann, Döblin's linguistic and metropolitan preoccupations are also allied with his longstanding admiration for Arno Holz, of whom he observed in 1922, "Es weiss seit langen Jahrzehnten niemand so wie Arno Holz, was die deutsche Sprache ist."<sup>59</sup> Döblin chose to elaborate on this knowledge in the 1929 funeral oration by praising Holz's rejection of an artificial literary idiom in favor of the natural language of the people (AzL, p. 136). At the time, Döblin did so from the secure vantage point of one who considered that his own recent work had achieved that



liberation from the book so indispensable to the novel as epic work (AzL, p. 132).

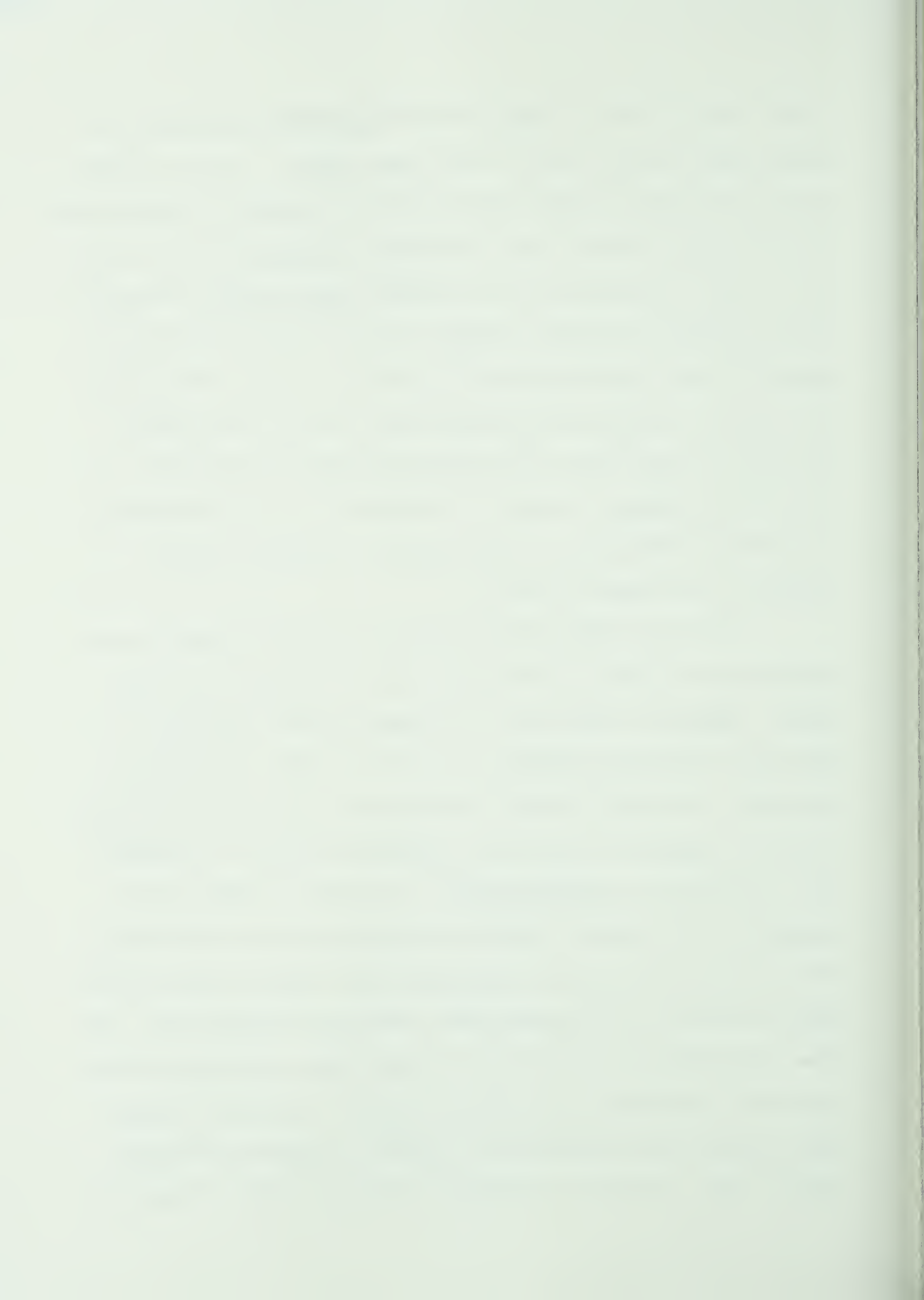
Severing the novel's ties with outmoded literary German and English ultimately consisted of far more than the naturalistic reproduction of the spoken tongue. Contact with living language signified the novel's appropriation of those forms most directly expressive of its raw material. Döblin's early advocacy of linguistic reform, which emphasized the dynamic potential of words as conveyors of mental and sensory images, advanced a concrete novelistic prose. His "steinernen Stil" (AzL, p. 18) was to be as free of ambiguity and abstraction as that ideal kind of writing a twenty-four-year-old Dos Passos likened to good architecture wherein "every inch must have something functional to do, must be an integral part of holding the building up" (14C, p. 286). Functionalism of this kind did not, however, restrict the novel's linguistic horizons. It actually enlarged them by emphasizing the full exploitation of language's productive power. Significantly, both Döblin and Dos Passos found very dramatic examples of the expanded frontiers they sought in Ulysses. Toward the end of the 1920s, Döblin had developed the relationship between the novel and language to the point where linguistic sovereignty, along with that of imagination, constituted the epic work's distinguishing feature (AzL, p. 94). Within "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung" Döblin underscored these observations by citing notable examples of the dual sovereignty. Along with the predictably present Arno Holz is Joyce or, more specifically, his Ulysses. Although "kein Kunstwerk" by Döblin's reckoning, Ulysses was a significant achievement executed through the most important elements





of art. Not the least of these was the "losgelassene selbstherrliche Sprache" that revealed itself in many places (Idem.). As was remarked earlier, Dos Passos, who had been struck by the Portrait's expressiveness in 1918, did not testify to the 1922 impact of Ulysses until the 1960s. But the 1932 "Introduction" for the reissued Three Soldiers contrasted Joyce's "working with speech straight" with the claptrap and "romantic garbage" of the "day dream artists" (p. viii). It also attributed to his language a representative potential and a social effectiveness that clearly reflect more of Dos Passos' own priorities than the realities of Ulysses. Even so, the interpretation is in keeping with the American's admiration for the strength of language he found elsewhere, as in Baroja's novels.<sup>60</sup>

Translated somewhat differently, this effective capacity serves as the focus for Döblin in the projections of "Der Bau des epischen Werks." Inherent in every level of language was both a productive power and a restraining character of which the author must be fully cognizant. Furthermore, whoever recognized the interaction between the formal and imaginative power of the linguistic components, recognized "das Grundfaktum der lebenden Sprache." According to Döblin, this language is "ein blühendes, konkretes Phänomenon, kennt keine 'Worte,' wie die Welt keine einzelnen Gegenstände kennt, fließt in Worten und Sätzen anschaulich und gedankengefüllt, erlebt und durchfühlt hin. Es lässt sich übrigens viel sagen über die sehr banale Scheidung von Prosa und Poesie, prosaischer und poetischer Sprache. Im wirklich Epischen hält jedenfalls diese Scheidung für schärfer Blickenden nicht stand" (AzL, p. 132). In effect, the extent to which the novel is updated or,



more precisely, the epic work reborn and regenerated, is largely dependent upon the degree to which that work assumes the dimensions of a "lebende Wortkunstwerk" (AzL, p. 132). From this conclusion follows one more: Döblin's proposed transformation of the novel confers upon its author the role of "singer." In Döblin's scheme, however, the role is realizable only insofar as allowed by the modern world's confinement of "song" to writing.

Although not expressed directly in conjunction with the novel, a similar dimension is admitted in the perspective that engendered Manhattan Transfer. In the American rendition, which also ignored conventional dichotomies between poetry and prose, the "living language" captures the essence and rhythms of modern experience and fuses them into coherent song. Somewhat akin to Döblin's reflections on the pioneering work of non-novelist Arno Holz, Dos Passos' relevant considerations on the subject are contained in his homage to Blaise Cendrars. Already in his major long poems written before the War, the Swiss-born writer-adventurer, whose daring innovations in technique and subject matter strongly impressed the older Apollinaire, had sought to incorporate modern life in poetry through new style, rhythm, and content. Breaking with traditional vocabulary and modes of expression, even with those strophic and rhyming conventions retained by the Symbolists, Cendrars drew his vocabulary from the living language, from popular speech, and from technical expressions. His poetry absorbed the material of big city and low life, of machines, commerce, transportation, and publicity. In this Francophone descendent of Whitman Dos Passos saw a very distinctive witness to the age.





Despite the fact that the specific tribute to the French poet which forms the substance of "Homer of the Transsiberian" was not paid until almost a year after Manhattan Transfer's publication, familiarity with Cendrars predates the 1926 Saturday Review piece by several years. This is corroborated by a statement from Dos Passos--to Landsberg (pp. 243-244 note 45) that some of Cendrars' early poetry may have helped determine the form of Manhattan Transfer. More telling evidence is furnished within the novel itself (MT, p. 220). There Cendrars' imprint appears in the "squirrel cage" metaphor for modern existence taken from Le Panama, ou les Aventures de mes sept oncles (1919). Much given to frequently repeating imagery and phrases he found apt, Dos Passos subsequently calls particular attention to the expression in the 1926 Saturday Review essay (p. 202). In an age which required new song, however, Cendrars was no mere provider of well-turned metaphors. As Dos Passos had observed time and again in his correspondence and journalism, new myths were needed to redress the imbalance created by an industrialism pursued for profit and power, that same industrialism whose negative consequences had been dramatically corroborated by the recent war. According to his "Homer of the Transsiberian," writers and poets could play an important role in the necessary shaping of new myths and the destruction of old ones.

The persistence of obsolescent deities and the tentative erection of their would-be replacements were everywhere evident among the "tin gods, steel gods, gods of uranium and manganese, living gods--here's Mrs. Besant rigging a new Jesus in Bombay, carefully educated at Oxford for the rôle--red gods of famine and revolution, old gods



laid up in libraries, plaster divinities colored to imitate coral at Miami, spouting oil gods at Tulsa, Okla." (p. 222). It was only too apparent that the corrective was yet wanting: "The sun of our generation has broken out in pimples, its shattered light flickers in streaks of uneasy color. . . . Out of the Babel of city piled on city, continent on continent, the world squeezed small and pulled out long, bouncing like a new rubber ball, we get what? Certainly not peace." (Idem.). Consequently, there was need for poets like Cendrars, one of the "sons of Homer going about the world beating into some sort of human rhythm the shrieking bullaballo, making us less afraid" (Idem.). With his "Homeric hymns" of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Cendrars recalled "the first great exploit of the Twentieth Century seen through sooty panes" (p. 202). Among his adventures of seven runaway uncles whose exploits took them across the globe, he had "managed to capture the grandiose rhythms of America of seventy-five years ago, the myths of which our generation is just beginning to create" (Idem.). Conjuring up the phenomena unquestionably deified by a machine age helped, in one sense, to dispel the anxieties in an era of uncertain values. Thus the poet emerges as "a kind of medicine man trying to evoke the things that are our cruel and avenging gods. Turbines, triple-expansion engines, dynamite, high tension coils, navigation, speed, flight, annihilation. No medicine man has been found yet strong enough to cope with them, but in cubist Paris they have invented some fetishes and grisgris that many are finding useful" (p. 222). At the same time, and more importantly, as he molded a significant aspect of modern experience into coherence in "La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jeanne de



France" (1913), Cendrars was surely to be reckoned as one of the "myth-makers at work" (p. 202).

If we recall the early assessment of Whitman's dependence on the future as the only feasible course for tradition-free writing in "Against American Literature," we should hardly find the Whitmanesque cast to Dos Passos' thinking surprising. Like his friend Hart Crane, another of Whitman's twentieth-century progeny, Dos Passos was not to achieve anything remotely approaching the American Romanticist's integrating nineteenth-century vision. Moreover, the popular sense in which Dos Passos employs the term "myth" points up a discrepancy between the epic singers of old and their latter-day counterparts. Despite the non-equivalence his usage raises, Dos Passos' recourse to "epic" associations is, like Döblin's, not without importance. In what is still one of the more interesting approaches to Manhattan Transfer by a U.S. scholar, E. D. Lowry has suggested that "Dos Passos may have seen a parallel between his own work and that of the early epic poets who raised the unexamined beliefs of their societies to a new level of mature, coherent understanding." Lowry's proposal is well taken. At a point when modern man was prone to uncritically fashion graven images from industrialism and technology, the writer could hold up his new idols for precisely the kind of scrutiny indispensable to the forging of a restorative new outlook.

By 1934, in a review of Robert Cantwell's novelistic treatment of a Pacific lumber town, Dos Passos affirmed that telling "truly, and not romantically or sentimentally, about the relation between men and machines" was among the most important tasks confronting contemporary





novelists in "coping with machinery, which is now the core of human life." Over ten years earlier he had referred to that subject's literary potential when, considering the resurgence of Catalan literature of the 1850s, he conjectured about its future components. For succeeding generations "perhaps the symbols will be the cluck of oiled cogs, the whirring of looms, the dragon forms of smoke spewed out of tall chimneys, and the substance will be the painful struggle for freedom, for sunnier, richer life of the huddled mobs of the slaves of the machines" (RRA, p. 161). As yet futurity for Catalans, such symbols and substance formed present experience for Americans. Full realization of this material's potential in Dos Passos' evolving poetic of the novel appears to invest the work with several interrelated functions. As it takes on the attributes of documentation, "acid test," and finally, song, the novel assumes a multilayered approach to the life "beating" around it. In doing so, the truthful expression of reality becomes an inseparable fusion of that reality's presentation and penetration.<sup>61</sup>

The very agents for directly communicating physiognomy also facilitated the surface probe. An extension of the cohesion of technique and material described earlier, this coalescence of presentation and penetration was to be achieved through the immediacy of means. Whereas Dos Passos does not dwell on the subject at any length, his attention to the power of Cendrars' "salty French sonorous and direct as the rattle of the Grands Express Européens," to the near music of Cummings' prose, and, most of all, to Baroja's acid yeastiness illustrate his recognition of the multiple functions



directly expressive language would perform. If its potential were effectively utilized, language would convey the dual representation now indispensable to novel-writing.

Realization of the dual goal also required flexibility in narrative method. Dos Passos was never to prove as opposed to traditional narrative exposition as Döblin, but his work clearly reveals that its new alternatives often seemed preferable and far more appropriate for the kind of communication he sought. As with his 1936 explanation of the impact of visual stimuli upon patterns of behavior and perception responsible for "eyemindedness," however, Dos Passos only commented--and indirectly at that--on his own internalization of these changes after Manhattan Transfer's publication. A 1927 New York Times defense of Cummings' experimental drama "Him" finds Dos Passos, much like Döblin a year later in the first sentences of "Der Bau des epischen Werks," offering a typical sample of the nineteenth-century linear narrative mode. Against it the American holds up the new kind of writing which "has grown up in the half-century since Rimbaud" and "might be called oblique in the sense that it attempts to generate feelings and ideas rather than put them immediately up to the understanding, and direct in that it aims to express sensations rather than tell about them." Like Döblin in Alexanderplatz, Dos Passos was to exploit the subjective brand of the new kind of writing in Manhattan Transfer only insofar as it suited the communication of external reality he sought. He too contemplated a route for the novel that moved in opposite direction from the path of interior fiction.<sup>62</sup>





The multilayered expression of reality and its foundation in direct presentation receive far more detailed consideration from Döblin. An early adherent of authorial silence, Döblin proclaimed in his 1913 "Berliner Programm" that the material put before the reader should not appear as if it were spoken but as if it really existed (AzL, p. 17). Part of a campaign against that authorial hegemony which allowed for the constant interposition of the author between his subject and the reader, usually through discursive essayistic interpolations, character analysis, and abstract generalizations, Döblin's recommendations for novelistic reform in the 1917 "Über Roman und Prosa" advanced the artistic superiority of Darsteller over Erzähler. They advised that the novelist must above all be capable of remaining silent. The author was to "speak" in the novel, but only indirectly through a shaping of his material (p. 214). He thus became the "darstellende Autor" who "schweigt, erzählt nicht, verwandelt sich gänzlich in den sehr konkreten Vorgang. Man erkennt ihn nicht als Autor, so wie man Zeus nicht als Stier erkannte, wie er die Europa raube, nicht in dem Regen, wie er sich der Danae näherte. Nicht einmal er selbst erkennt sich in den Vorgängen. Der Leser, allein gelassen, muss durch wirkliche Strassen gehen, in denen er sich zu orientieren, zurechtzufinden hat. Vor einer eisernen, stummen Front muss er stehen" (p. 215).

This fundamental advocacy of direct presentation is retained in the expansion of Döblin's views during the next decade. For a 1926 survey inquiring which stylistic phrase he most hated, for example, Döblin demonstrated his consistent aversion to traditional reportorial style with the terse reply "Er sagte."<sup>63</sup> The more elaborate



Bau des epischen Werks continued to assert the primacy of (re)presentation over narration (AzL, p. 111). Now, however, directness was underlined in a very particular way: "wir stellen im Epischen die Dinge genau so gegenwärtig dar und sie werden auch so aufgenommen, wie der Dramatiker. Wir stellen beide dar. Alle Darstellung ist gegenwärtig, sie mag formal erfolgen wie sie will. Der Unterschied zwischen dem Epiker und Dramatiker besteht darin, dass der Dramatiker vor den Sinnesorganen der Augen und Ohren ablaufen lässt, der Epiker aber als Darstellungsort die Phantasie aufsucht. Allein dieser geistige Ort, Bühne oder Phantasie, unterscheidet die beide Dichtungsarten voneinander" (AzL, p. 112).

Within the representational region demarcated by Döblin, there was now room for more than the earlier "steinernen Stil" of absolute narrative objectivity and the extreme domination of empirically verifiable and concrete materiality. Döblin might still maintain "Nichts schien mir wichtiger als die sogenannte Objektivität des Erzählers" (AzL, p. 113), but he simultaneously allotted considerable space for various modulations of the author's voice. Döblin explained this advance over his earlier position by referring briefly to that particular discovery of the self and its integration in the broad scheme put forward by his naturism (AzL, p. 114). When applied to artistic production, as it is in "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung," this new importance of the creative self as an offshoot of nature establishes the author as a form of "schaffende Natur" (AzL, p. 96). Döblin's implication that the evolving extra-artistic insights were alone responsible for these more varied projections of the author seems



open to question. To what extent this development is also affected by non-naturist understandings remains, of course, a matter of speculation. It must be raised, however, since Döblin's work is never single in inspiration and derives its impetus from multiple sources.

With its chameleonlike shifts in narrative modes, a new one appropriated for each section in a manner unmistakably reminiscent of Ulysses, Döblin's autobiographical "Erster Rückblick" (1928) suggests that the reading of Joyce's work demonstrated that direct presentation and narrative flexibility were not incompatible. In addition, the often noted resemblance between the Bänkelsänger-like narrator of Alexanderplatz--soon to re-emerge, albeit somewhat modified, as the speaker in Die Ehe--and its probably prototype, the Moritatensänger of Brecht's Dreigroschenoper (1928), hints at some German stimulus for the rehabilitation of a personal narrator and its new acceptability to Döblin. Indeed, such stimulus may have been furnished as well by the prologue in Paquet's Fahnen (1924). Even as these considerations may qualify Döblin's explanation for his new assertions that the author "darf . . . soll und muss" "im epischen Werk mitsprechen, . . . in diese Welt hineinspringen" (AzL, p. 114), however, the position itself does not contradict or reverse the earlier denial of authorial voice and visibility. That, it should be remembered, was largely a reaction to the authorial excesses which abounded in the German novel. Moreover, the new concession to "lyrisch, dramatisch und reflexiv" (Idem.) stances is entirely consistent with the pursuit of that formal and stylistic flexibility so indispensable to the epic work's evolution.

While granting this new mobility to the author, Döblin simul-





taneously provided for a broad interpretation of that experience which must now serve as his raw material. The writer was to explore actuality as the foundation for his work, but he was to do so in a way that extended beyond its mere reproduction. That this was applicable to specific social realities, which did not cease to interest Döblin towards the latter twenties, is clear from a survey response of November 1928. It contains allusions to the concerns Döblin faced in his work in progress. Given its relation to facts and its confrontation with life, the Berliner Tageblatt inquired, should fiction seek a connection with things of the day or should it produce a new and particular reality of its own? Döblin's colloquial and direct answer encapsulated the general argument presented a year later in "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung," that is, that the data of reality furnished a base which literature then proceeded to creatively supplement (AzL, p. 90). Now, however, Döblin exclaimed that writing in a vacuum amounted to aesthetic twaddle, to private nonsense, and was not possible. At the same time, chattering away about entirely private views on politics, punishment, or lovemaking was equally undesirable for those who wrote about capitalism and communism, for those whose characters spoke of class struggle or religion, or even for those who drew things up out of criminal life "mit gewissen Spitzen anderswohin." The artist was a creator, not an orator; art's reality hardly consisted of seeing at the theatre what was experienced at home. Pure and simple confrontation with the housing shortage and unemployment--two aspects of reality which Döblin would soon explore in Die Ehe--was inadequate. "Die Wirklichkeit," he remarked, "muss erobert werden!" These 1928



assertions partially continue the line of Döblin's earlier prewar "Die Kunst sollte die Natur nicht treffen, sondern übertreffen," a generalization articulated in the 1910 "Gespräche mit Kalypso über die Musik." Yet as specific responses to more recent conditions, these conclusions are not identical with the earlier ones. Moreover, they bear the obvious imprint of Döblin's growing disagreement with the artistic program of writers on the revolutionary left.<sup>64</sup>

Exploiting and surpassing reality receive additional attention from Döblin in "Der Bau des epischen Werks." Here the processes serve to further differentiate between Döblin's epic artist and the mere writer of novels. Pursuing "eine solid bürgerliche, nützliche gewerbliche Beschäftigung," the latter "imitiert, ohne in die Realität einzudringen oder sie gar zu durchstossen, einige Oberflächen der Realität. Der wirkliche Produzent aber muss zwei Schritten tun: er muss ganz nahe an die Realität heran, an ihre Sachlichkeit, ihr Blut, ihren Geruch, und dann hat er die Sache zu durchstossen, das ist seine spezifische Arbeit" (AzL, p. 107). This interaction between proximity and penetration constitutes, in fact, the essence of the epic work. When successful, its producer solidly forced his way next to reality and pierced its curtain. Doing so, he reached the great fundamental situations and figures of human existence epitomized by his work's exemplary events and figures (pp. 132, 106). Ultimately, the expanded, reformed novel envisaged by Döblin granted a new totality to art which supplemented reality in a very special way. The epic work simultaneously created two closely connected spheres of reality, the "reale Sphäre" and a second or "überreale" one which, so to speak, negated the first

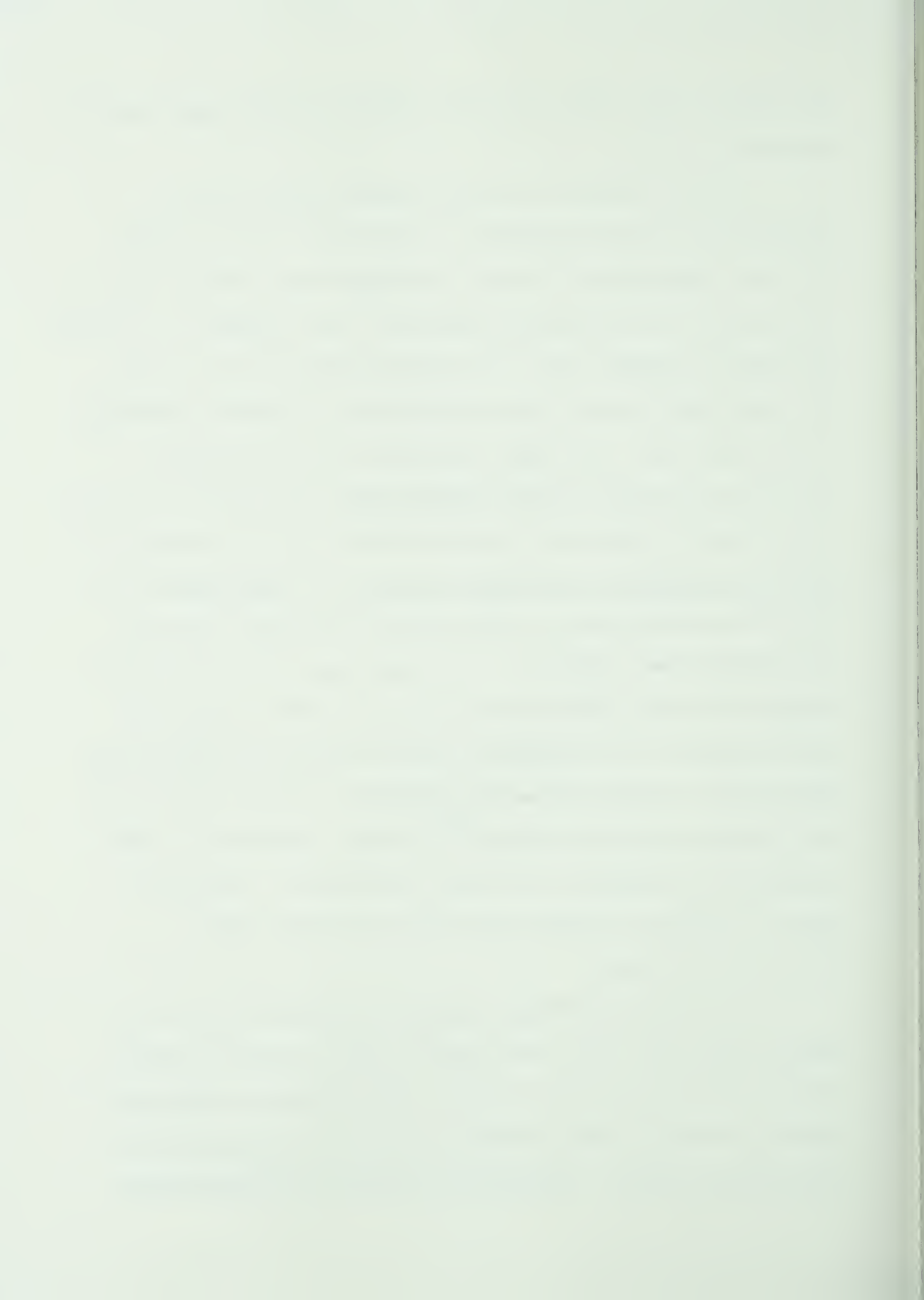




and emerged as "die Sphäre einer neuen Wahrheit und einer ganz besonderen Realität" (p. 111).

Like his attempts to join the insights he derived from contemporary history and industrial, technological, and metropolitan life with a translation of the age's essential nature, Döblin's approach to the novel is far-reaching and ambitious.<sup>65</sup> His endeavors to reassess the novel's substance, means, and ultimate goals in artistic terms bear unmistakable traces of the non-materialist, collective imperatives he saw outside art. What Döblin contemplated as the "epic work," specifically manifested through Alexanderplatz, was an artistic parallel for the utopian socialism and the naturism that form the substance of Wissen und Verändern!, Das Ich über der Natur, and Unser Dasein. In its own way the novel was to effectively and artistically expose the new meaning of mass experience. It is significant that from his 1917 reading of the work, Döblin rejected Einstein's study on relativity. Its presentation of new knowledge in highly specialized language incomprehensible to laymen fostered the exclusivity of science and elevated its spokesmen to priestlike status.<sup>66</sup> As Döblin understood it, such a program was antithetical to the age's requirements. Undeniably, his own program was conceived from what he considered a more reconciliatory position.

For his part, Dos Passos was not to interpret the novel as a book of revelations. But he was still to endow it with the exposure of what lay beneath surface externals. With far greater clarity than Döblin, the American writer offered his definitive interpretation in the 1968 Rome address. Drawing upon a passage from William Harvey's



Circulation of Blood, Dos Passos cited the English physician's description of a small shrimp whose transparent body permitted unobstructed observation of the heart and its motions. He then concluded, "The aim, the never quite attainable aim of the novelist or historian is to see men's private emotions and their movements in masses as clearly as William Harvey saw the heart of the shrimp and to express what they see as lucidly as Harvey did . . ."<sup>67</sup> "Seeing" and "expressing" were never to have the connotations of their equivalents in Döblin's vocabulary. Yet Dos Passos' understanding of them also conferred upon the novel the dual aspect of expressing the fundamental situations and figures of human existence as they now presented themselves. Understandably, in the early twenties he had not yet attained this degree of articulateness. He resorted instead to the kind of generalizations evident in his statement that Baroja was too much of an artist to propagandize and abandon the novelist's function, that is, "to tell stories about people" (RRA, p. 96). Be that as it may, both the "telling" and the "stories" were invested with a new breadth and depth commensurate with the expanded novel Dos Passos was already advocating.



## CHAPTER V

### TRANSLATIONS OF THE MODERNIST

#### DILEMMA: MANHATTAN TRANSFER

#### AND BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

#### VERSUS ULYSSES

#### Apollinaire versus Mallarmé

In any case study the establishment of a prehistory is an indispensable procedure. A complete analysis, however, requires evidence of the condition under examination in its full development. Thus the present inquiry enters its final phase of investigation. Having located Modernist symptoms in attitudes critical of the state of German and American literature, in apprehensions of new experiential realities, and in interpretations of new artistic and novelistic priorities, we need now to confront Modernism's most telling manifestations. They are provided by Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz themselves.

Although unique among Dos Passos' and Döblin's novels, the two works cannot, of course, be considered in total isolation from their authors' earlier efforts in the genre. As translations and absorptions of that recent experience which occupied the attention of Dos Passos and Döblin within and beyond literature, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz were democratizations of art designed to be inherently artistic and to simultaneously endow the novel with an expansive and reconciliatory character. At the same time, Manhattan Transfer and





Alexanderplatz are partially anticipated by their immediate predecessors. To some extent the latter reveal the exploration of similar raw material from different perspectives.

From the "Chinese novel" Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun (1912-13; published 1915) through the futuristic and utopian Berge Meere und Giganten (1921-23; published 1924), Döblin's works are preoccupied with relationships between man and milieu. In their world the individual is always presented in association with the collective forces surrounding and containing him. These may be natural, political, and social (Wang-lun and Wallenstein), technological and industrial (Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfturbine), or a combination of all forms (Berge Meere und Giganten). Marking an advance over his earliest attempts in the genre, the four novels preceding Alexanderplatz drew upon the collective, technological, industrial, and urban life which strongly impressed Döblin. To a certain extent, his neophyte novels "Die jagenden Rosse" (1900) and Der schwarze Vorhang (1902-03; published 1912 and 1919), which originated around the turn of the century and bore the stamp of late nineteenth-century Neo-Romanticism and Symbolism, also confronted individuality and collectivity. They offered subjective treatments of a reality in which the isolated individual, himself in a state of inner and psychic disharmony, remained unintegrated with the totality of sometimes hostile natural and cosmic forces. They also initiated that general emphasis on man within the total complex of nature that runs through all of Döblin's novels. Nevertheless, "Die jagenden Rosse" and Der schwarze Vorhang are products of an immature artistic orientation still untempered by the specific concerns of the following decades.



These novels must therefore be regarded in isolation from the kind of social, historical, and aesthetic context associated with the later works.<sup>1</sup>

Among Dos Passos' pre-Manhattan Transfer novels, the similarity of subject matter is a far more pronounced feature. That fact can be attributed to a common ancestry for One Man's Initiation--1917 (1918-19; published 1920), Three Soldiers (1918-21; published 1921), and Streets of Night (1922; published 1923). All three derive from the unpublished "Seven Times Round the Walls of Jericho." Apparently begun during the summer of 1916, the project was enlarged and taken up again as a collaborative enterprise with Harvard friend and fellow ambulance driver Robert Hillyer during the summer of 1917 in France. It was subsequently pursued as a solo effort by Dos Passos from December 1917 until the early spring of 1922. The four-part novel took its central character, a Martin Howe also known as "Fibbie," through a sensitive childhood and adolescence, a Harvard education and Cambridge residence, the New York of wartime mobilization, and finally the war itself. "Seven Times Round the Walls of Jericho" engendered, in fact, all of the novelistic and dramatic efforts from One Man's Initiation through Manhattan Transfer. The Harvard section, some of which can be traced back to the summer of 1916, reappeared completely overhauled in Streets of Night. Some of the departure sequence and most of the war chapters furnished One Man's Initiation. The latter portions extended over into Three Soldiers, where they provided, among other things, the composer character of John Andrews. The New York episodes and parts of the introductory segments contained the seeds of situations, themes, and characters for both The





Garbage Man and Manhattan Transfer.<sup>2</sup>

While it reintroduced the theme of youthful sensitivity in the face of a hostile environment central to much of Dos Passos' Harvard fiction, "Seven Times Round the Walls of Jericho" was already moving beyond a subjective preoccupation with individualism as its dominant focus. Traces of the broadened outlook--a perspective significantly influenced by Dos Passos' European contacts--are apparent, for example, in the diary jottings for "Jericho" which record its main concerns and sketch out its situations, dialogues, and major divisions. Of the three published novels, each colored by varying proportions of youthful subjectivism, Three Soldiers shows the furthest advance, especially in its portrayal of army life's consequences for representative individuals. Based upon its author's Harvard years, Streets of Night is chronologically antecedent to One Man's Initiation and Three Soldiers in the sense that its subject was first tackled in 1916. It is therefore a more direct outgrowth of the undergraduate writing and decidedly inferior to the treatments of contemporary life and its contradictions in both the amateurish One Man's Initiation and the more mature Three Soldiers. The latter novel, Dos Passos' most successful achievement prior to Manhattan Transfer, is the one which most noticeably foreshadows its successor. Features peculiar to Manhattan Transfer are anticipated in Three Soldiers by expressive section headings which encapsulate plot development through concise imagery, by the presentation of individuals in collectivity, by a triple character focus, and by the use of vernacular American English. Additional affinities can be noted in the innovative war novel's recourse to interior monologue,



its dependence upon narrative discontinuity, and its utilization of popular song fragments as ironic commentary.<sup>3</sup>

If Three Soldiers initiated something of a break with the traditional American novel, Döblin's early writing represented even more of a rupture with the conventions of the German form. His work also contains precedents for a number of characteristic features in Alexanderplatz. As Döblin's many German and Germanist commentators have pointed out, instances of montage, rapidly alternating shifts in narrative perspective, internal monologue, parodistic passages, and mythological parallels are to be found in Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun, Wallenstein, and the unsuccessful Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfturbine. The rest of Döblin's oeuvre also reveals that some of the technical features exploited en masse in Alexanderplatz predate and occur outside his novels. They are observable, for example, in the journalism and periodical contributions beginning with the Sturm writings. Even so, the direct antecedents for Berlin Alexanderplatz must be recognized as postwar, postrevolutionary products. They are present in the Linke Poot Zeitglossen and in the Berlin newspaper vignettes of the early 1920s. As Manfred Beyer has demonstrated in his useful study of the genesis of Alexanderplatz, the journalism anticipates much of the novel's specific content, narrative tone, character types, situations, locales, and representational means. Moreover, montage, parody, song and advertising inserts, and dramatically compressed language can be found in the periodical writing.<sup>4</sup>

This immediate non-novelistic ancestry for Alexanderplatz has a counterpart in the work of Dos Passos. His journalism, travel accounts,





diary entries, correspondence, novels, and drama only too clearly exhibit the frequent reworking of situations, characters, and imagery.<sup>5</sup> The tendency is patently manifest in the relationship between Manhattan Transfer and its direct antecedent, The Garbage Man. Its scenario, as Dos Passos claimed in December 1918, had "been gradually cooking for the longest time" (14C, p. 239) and had been outlined in rudimentary fashion that October (Ibid., pp. 224-225). The Moon is a Gong, as the expressionistic Parade with Shouting was originally called, derived some impetus from friendship with John Howard Lawson, who was engaged in his own Roger Bloomer and Processional projects around the time The Garbage Man was composed. Completed in late 1922, the play was slightly revised to incorporate the stage directions of Edward Massey's musical comedy method of presentation for its Boston and Cambridge productions in the spring of 1925.<sup>6</sup>

A broad treatment of U.S. society, The Garbage Man interprets its raw material through the impact of the success myth, epitomized by the advertising clichés which promulgate the values of industrialist capitalism, upon individual lives. The play exploits diverse representative and stereotypical characters and situations. It also embraces varieties of vernacular American English, popular culture, radio, and journalism. Emphasizing the connection between the play and the novel, Melvin Landsberg submits that The Garbage Man looks forward to Manhattan Transfer in form, substance, and function (pp. 107-113). The validity of Landsberg's claim is strengthened by the presence of conspicuous and numerous ties between the two works. They range from the shared use of typical situations and figures (derelicts, vagrants, immigrants,





capitalists, aesthetes, liberal intellectuals, and "Tom" and "Jane" protagonists who prefigure Jimmy Herf and Ellen Thatcher) through theme and setting. In these latter areas Part Two's New York furnishes an abbreviation of much of Manhattan Transfer. Dos Passos' stage treatment shows the metropolitan façade as the mecca for the success-starved and glamour-seeking while it simultaneously reveals New York's underside as an arena of grinding, crushing reality in which working people wear out their lives (GM, pp. 90-92). The correspondence between the play and the novel is, in fact, so pervasive that they ultimately appear as related treatments of the same material for different vehicles. Döblin was to attempt something similar later in the decade, as the undeniably strong affinities between Alexanderplatz and Die Ehe attest; however, his play and novel are largely complementary companion pieces. In comparison, the relationship between The Garbage Man and Manhattan Transfer is best described as one verging on duplication.

Having their immediate ancestry in Dos Passos' "Parade with Shouting" and in Döblin's satirical glosses and city vignettes, novels which are partially anticipated by their generic predecessors are distinctively different from them. Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz portray and interpret modern experience through its most characteristic contemporary manifestations within its central arena, the twentieth-century industrial metropolis. Although much of Berge Meere und Giganten takes place in Berlin and its general vicinity, its urban center is remote and futuristic. This is owing to its author's preferences. Döblin explained them in his 1924 "Bemerkungen zu Berge Meere und Giganten": "Mit der Gegenwart an sich war nichts anzufangen;



ich bin nicht Zola oder Balzac" (AzL, p. 34). Somewhat closer to the setting of Alexanderplatz, the Berlin of Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfturbine is a seat of twentieth-century technology and industry. It is none the less prewar, prerevolutionary Berlin which has yet to undergo the upheavals and rapid expansion that produced the city of the 1920s. Furthermore, Berlin is represented only minimally in Wadzek and, for that matter, in a fairly conventional manner when compared to its treatment in Alexanderplatz. Outside the novels, "Von der himmlischen Gnade" (1914) furnishes a kind of preliminary sketch for Alexanderplatz through its Lumpenproletariat milieu, low life of pimps and thieves, Berliner dialect, and colloquial narrative language. The story must therefore be included among the novel's forerunners in Döblin's inter-related fictional and non-fictional accounts of life in Berlin which begin with the 1896 "Modern."<sup>7</sup>

Metropolitan ancestors for Manhattan Transfer in Dos Passos' work are barely existent. Aside from its appearance in the second section of The Moon is a Gong, New York serves as the focus of only "Battery Park" and "Madison Square," two poems which appeared in the 1922 Pushcart at the Curb anthology.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, only the 1921 "Madison Square," where skyscrapers, briefly liberated noon hour garment workers smelling of sweat, "lunchrooms and burnt cloth" (PC, p. 192), and park bench derelicts contribute toward something of a city vignette. New York makes no more than a cursory bow at the brief harbor departure which opens One Man's Initiation, and the Boston-Cambridge setting for Streets of Night is hardly comparable to what becomes the very substance of Manhattan Transfer.





The nature of these early New York and Berlin encounters points up the probability of external stimuli for their elaborate and complex transformations in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. There is little doubt that Dos Passos and Döblin were moved to fictionally absorb the experience they sought to understand and interpret elsewhere because others had demonstrated that it was artistically possible to express the new metropolis and its life. Dos Passos provides something of a generalized explanation in the retrospective "What Makes a Novelist" when he reiterates the 1961 considerations of his Carleton College speech and unpublished portions of a draft for that same earlier address.<sup>9</sup> According to the 1968 version (p. 31), the American felt compelled to write a New York novel after his return from Europe and the Near East, that is, somewhere around early 1922:

My head stuffed with everything I could absorb in Europe and the Near East I came back to America. New York was the first thing that struck me. It was marvelous. It was hideous. It had to be described. The lives of the men I had known so intimately in the Army, of their women friends and mine, had to be related to the bloody panorama of history. The style of writing had to be made up as I went along. It was all an experiment. As I worked I used occasionally to reassure myself with the thought that at least some of the characters and scenes and feelings I was putting down might prove useful for the record.

Some of the poets who went along with the cubism of the painters of the School of Paris had talked about simultaneity. There was something about Rimbaud's poetry that tended to stand up off the pages. Direct snapshots of life. Rapportage was a great slogan. The artist must record the fleeting world the way the motion picture film recorded it. By contrast, juxtaposition, montage, he could build drama into his narrative. Somewhere along the way I had been impressed by Eisenstein's motion pictures, by his version of old D. W. Griffith's technique. Montage was his key word.

As for the enterprise itself, Dos Passos explained, "I started a rapportage on New York. Some of the characters out of abandoned youthful



narratives got into the book, but there was more to the life of a great city than you could cram into any one hero's career. The narrative must stand up off the page. Fragmentation. Contrast. Montage. The result was Manhattan Transfer."

This is not entirely the case. Occasional discrepancies and inaccuracies in some of Dos Passos' reminiscences have already been noted. Here again in the late account of Manhattan Transfer's genesis, there appears to be a slight confusion in demarcating the boundaries between the 1925 novel and its U.S.A. successors. Consequently, it is helpful to enlarge upon Dos Passos' statement and introduce a number of additional details. It is true that like the three novels preceding it, Manhattan Transfer draws upon the "Jericho" project. Moreover, even a sketchy April 1918 outline for the early novel's third section (14C, pp. 177-178), with its tentative connections between industrial capitalism and enslavement, suggests situations and characters allied with this theme in both Manhattan Transfer and U.S.A.<sup>10</sup> Culled from Dos Passos' 1917 stay in New York, a spring visit which found him attending anarchist and pacifist-sponsored anti-war and anti-conscription meetings--at least one of them broken up by police violence--and also frequenting the Lower East Side and Greenwich Village, this material was supplemented by his longest New York residence between the autumn of 1920 and the beginning of the following spring. The "jolly" and "mad" aspects of that New York, a "Babylon gone mad" numbering "Arrow-collar man" types among its denizens, profoundly impressed him. This is the city which served as the basis for Manhattan Transfer. The projected book, however, did not get under way until two years later.





Dos Passos first announced his intention to commence work on a long novel "about New York and go-getters and God knows what besides" in the spring of 1923 as he was embarking once more for Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Actual writing began only in the autumn of 1923,<sup>12</sup> almost two years after that January introduction to Ulysses which "disposed of the current theory that the English novel was dead" (BT, p. 148). The enterprise began in the quiet of New York's Rockaway peninsula. Work on the novel continued during a trip to New Orleans and ended back in Brooklyn at the same 110 Columbia Heights headquarters that had served two visionaries associated with the nearby Brooklyn Bridge: its designer Roebling and its poetic celebrant Hart Crane. It is tempting to speculate the extent to which Dos Passos' new metropolitan appetites were whetted by his exposure to Waldo Frank's City Block (1922), a work which Richard Stover Donnell has tentatively linked with Manhattan Transfer. Exclusively city-dweller rather than city oriented, Frank's effort is far less experimental than that of Dos Passos. The novel nevertheless resembles Manhattan Transfer in its collective emphasis and in the progression of its narrative through segments from the lives of representative New Yorkers. Although uncertain about the date of his reading of City Block, Dos Passos did admit his admiration for the work. In addition, he was receptive to Frank's social criticism before U.S. entry into the war and had met the associate editor of Seven Arts in connection with the submission of his "Young Spain" essay to that very magazine. Both facts suggest that Dos Passos would have inclined toward an early reading of the novel following its publication, possibly when in New York in early 1923. The hypothesis is supported by obvious





affinities between Frank's park bench tramp, who announces that he is "John the Baptist," and Manhattan Transfer's Jonah, the vagrant prophet of apocalypse (MT, pp. 380-381).<sup>13</sup> But if City Block did, in fact, direct Dos Passos' attention to New York as a fruitful subject for exploration in a novel, or at least corroborated his designs in this area, it must still be counted as only one of multiple stimuli. Indeed, it goes without saying that the assorted definite, probable, and possible fertilizing agents for Manhattan Transfer form a list considerably longer than the one offered in Dos Passos' loose and generalizing 1968 account.<sup>14</sup>

No less than Dos Passos' novel, which it approximates in its own traces of numerous interartistic progenitors,<sup>15</sup> Alexanderplatz has an origin defying absolute precision. Döblin's frequently quoted avoidance of the topic, the 1932 "Afterword" statement that "Es wäre eine lange Geschichte zu erzählen, wie ich zum Stoff zu dem Grundmotiv des Buches kam" is hardly helpful here. Neither, for that matter, is his confinement of explanations to biography and philosophy when he mentions only his professional contact with lower class Berlin, his familiarity with the city's eastern districts before the war, during the Spartacist uprising, and in the troubled early twenties, and his pursuit of a "metaphysical" line of thought in a work which continued and concretized his naturism (BA, pp. 505-506). Surely part of the "lange Geschichte" was the desire to appease his publisher and to satisfy his own artistic and material needs after the miserable financial and popular failure of Manas (1926; published 1927), a mythological verse epic which anticipates the course of Franz Biberkopf's



spiritual journey in the progress of its Indian prince and general. In tackling a "Berliner Roman . . . einer epischer Art in normaler Sprache" (AzL, p. 359), as he described Alexanderplatz in 1928 to the Berliner Volks-Zeitung, Döblin probably hoped to avoid a repetition of the Manas fiasco. These practical considerations to which Müller-Salget has rightly called attention, however, are only part of the long story. Certainly they must be combined with those socio-political interests Beyer has emphasized in his own study of the novel's genesis.<sup>16</sup> Allowances need to be made also for the effects produced by artistic catalysts, such as those responsible for the Nachwort admission that "Man kann auch von Berlin schreiben, ohne Zola zu imitieren" (BA, p. 507).

The same Döblin who began his work on Alexanderplatz around the time that Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer appeared in German translation did an abrupt about-face with respect to the preferred settings and specific subjects of his work. Only ten months earlier, in a January 22, 1927 contribution to the Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung, the author of Manas claimed that any relationship between his writing and his specific milieu was one of transformation. Through the process his environment's features lost their readily identifiable details. Döblin even went so far as to declare here, "Ich kann viel besser schreiben--und zwar viel sicherer und realer--über das, was in China und Indien vorgeht, als das, was in Berlin vorgeht" (VG, p. 378). Far from being one more example of self-contradiction, the comment probably alludes to Wadzek's early failure to artistically realize contemporary Berlin. What proved that it was artistically possible to return to his own city and his own period in the novel may well have come from





outside Döblin's preferred genre. Brecht's Dreigroschenoper and its innovative dramatization of London low life is not an unlikely impetus, as early readers of the novel implied. It is also conceivable that film provided certain insights, particularly when it offered a typical day in the life of continental Europe's largest urban center. Relying on rhythmical and montage effects in the manner of Dziga Vertov and the "Kino-Eye" group,<sup>17</sup> Walter Ruttmann's Berlin, die Symphonie einer Grossstadt (1927) is a film which Döblin, much attached to his city and interested in cinema, may well have seen. Yet beyond these an additional stimulus was still required. Döblin had charged German literature in general and the novel and theatre in particular with neglect of the major sphere of German life, the industrial metropolis.<sup>18</sup> While he had amply demonstrated that he himself could capture that arena in his non-novelistic writing, Döblin needed a catalyst in the genre that most interested him. It was conveniently furnished by examples from abroad.

In the light of their interests in updating the novel and in endowing it with an expressive function directly connected with modern experience, it is hardly surprising that Ulysses was beneficial to Dos Passos and Döblin. At the same time it is obvious that Manhattan Transfer and Berlin Alexanderplatz were inspired by the drive to reconcile art and artist with society and to restore public attributes to the writer when he could ill afford to be detached from his total milieu. If the novel was to incorporate and translate modern experience, specifically in its most contemporary forms, it would do so for the purpose of providing its reader with more than aesthetic pleasure.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1900

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

AND THE FACULTY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Individuals might come away from the artistic encounters with new insights about the essential nature of mass, industrial, and capitalist life and be stimulated toward further conclusions that would affect their actions in collectivity. Even allowing for the different stages in their ideological development and the divergent emphasis of their thinking, Döblin and Dos Passos are equally representative of those bourgeois writers for whom artistic disengagement had become, if not a problem successfully resolved, at least an untenable position. In contrast, disengagement is the very mark of Joyce's aesthetic posture. For this reason the distinction between the stance associated with Ulysses and those varieties responsible for Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz cannot be emphasized strongly enough if the works' points of convergence and divergence are to be fully appreciated.

As any reader even casually familiar with the vast and proliferating body of Joyce scholarship is aware, its subject's dual concern with the representation of life through the medium of the written word and with revolutionizing that medium has received extensive and frequent attention. If to a lesser extent, the question of aesthetic theory as extracted from Joyce's writing, particularly from Stephen Hero and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, has nevertheless attracted much interest from assorted complementary and contradictory viewpoints.<sup>19</sup> Since neither Joyce nor his work forms the central focus of this study, it is hardly desirable or practical to reproduce here what has already received ample and often eloquent treatment elsewhere. It is, however, essential to briefly reiterate in general terms some of the distinguishing features of Joyce's artistic attitudes insofar





as they are germane to present discussion.

While Döblin and Dos Passos are best associated with that Apollinairean strain present in Modernism, Joyce's development is one which leads in the opposite direction toward Mallarmé.<sup>20</sup> An exile from his own country, whose history of foreign subjugation, repressive institutions, and narrowly chauvinistic nationalism were intolerable to him as an artist and private citizen, Joyce exiled himself as well from contemporary history, even when it came perilously close enough to affect the lives of his friends and intimates. The deliberate avoidance of reference to almost any events outside the domestic sphere that is so visible in the aforementioned Letters is substantiated by the additional evidence of Joyce's biography and the testimony of friends and intimates.<sup>21</sup> The conspicuous silence suggests more than a refusal to confer any legitimacy upon the follies of governments or human suffering by acknowledging them. Inherent here, it seems, is a sense of futility with respect to the ability of individuals or individuals in groups to effect any changes in the status quo. The impression is strengthened by Frank Budgen's account (p. 191) of Ulysses' endowment with all the attributes of exile and refuge:

The actual writing of Ulysses occupied Joyce about eight years. For half of that time all Europe was at war: and peace, when it came, was as disturbing as, though less destructive than, war. Several revolutions shook the world. Crowns and currencies fell. No permanence was in the air. A dozen times in that period Joyce changed his domicile. The Abbé Sieyès, asked what he did under the terror, replied: "J'ai vecu [sic]." Joyce, if asked what he did during the Great War, could reply: "I wrote Ulysses." He was of an extraordinary toughness of fibre and tenacity of purpose, but neither toughness nor tenacity would have helped him if he had not possessed the faculty of shutting out at will all noises in the street, if he had not been able not to be unduly distressed about what he could not alter.





This isolation of Ulysses and, by extension, art itself from the "noises in the street" best describes the outlook informing Joyce's post-Portrait works.

To a great extent that outlook is not fundamentally different from the early position Joyce articulated long before undertaking the writing of Ulysses. While it would be an oversimplification to identify Joyce's artistic stance exclusively in terms of the one expressed in the Critical Writings, Stephen Hero, and the Portrait, the thread of artistic estrangement that is first taken up in the opening paragraphs of the 1901 "Day of the Rabblement" was never relinquished by Joyce.<sup>22</sup> Engendered by rebellion against a hostile and repressive Irish society which either displayed narrow-minded prejudices against art or attempted to make it conform to the criteria of Irish nationalism, Joyce's aesthetic orientation, like Flaubert's before him, is rooted in a sharp and irrevocable schism between the artist and his society. When integration is sought, it is that internal variety which facilitates the detachment and freedom required for the creation of beauty. The social or political concerns that temper and sometimes determine the artistic conclusions of a Dos Passos or a Döblin, yet unconvinced of the unalterability of man's actions in collectivity and the course of history, do not impinge upon this task.

It is true, of course, that before 1912, when exile from Ireland became a permanent way of life, Joyce did briefly seek to establish a connection between his own search for artistic freedom and the liberation others advanced for society at large. Several letters written from Trieste and Rome to his brother Stanislaus from 1905-6 reveal a



short-lived attachment to both socialism and the Sinn Fein, whose program for Irish independence then embraced economic sanctions rather than armed struggle against England. Apparently dating back to 1903-4, years that found him present at the occasional meetings of a non-Marxist socialist group in Dublin and also temporarily attracted to the brand of anarchism advocated by the American Benjamin Tucker, Joyce's socialist interests were further stimulated by his Triestine contacts. Then under Austro-Hungarian domination, the city's ethnically diverse population included several political factions, among them Irredentists seeking union with Italy, and socialists who, three years after their successful campaign to launch a general strike in Trieste, drew renewed strength from the 1905 Russian uprising. In addition, Joyce's leftward inclinations of the period coincide with his favorable impressions of Italian anarcho-syndicalism as espoused by Arturo Labriola. But despite the claim that his "political opinions" were "those of a socialistic artist" (L2, p. 89) and the odd reference to "the emancipation of the proletariat" (Ibid., p. 148), Joyce's "socialism" remained ill-defined, devoid of any political character, and far more tenuous than the leftward inclinations of Döblin or Dos Passos. As he himself confessed to Stanislaus, it was thin "and unsteady and ill-informed" (Ibid., p. 187). Moreover, the vagueness of its nature was seconded only by its weakness. Close, as Ellmann suggests, to Oscar Wilde's interpretation of socialism, which emphasized self-protection and individual freedom, it was also equated with a refuge from the tyranny of the Church and such abusive bourgeois institutions as marriage. Equally important, it was a socialism that might provide state subsidies for artists, thereby





freeing them from the burdensome financial problems that plagued Joyce and his family. Before very long, however, Joyce was disavowing his socialist affiliations. By March of 1907, during an obviously low period marked by difficulties in writing, he declared, "The interest I took in socialism and the rest has left me." Although he had certain ideas to which he wanted to give form "not as a doctrine but as the continuation of the expression of myself which I now see I began in Chamber Music," he averred that "These ideas or instincts or intuitions or impulses may be purely personal. I have no wish to codify myself as anarchist or socialist or reactionary" (Ibid., p. 217).<sup>23</sup>

A somewhat similar pattern characterizes Joyce's interest in the Sinn Fein. During this same period he believed that its policy of economic and political independence might prove more effective toward achieving independence than parliamentary agitation. Considering that "either Sinn Fein or Imperialism will conquer the present Ireland" (L2, p. 187), he obviously preferred the former alternative. Furthermore, he admitted that the kind of success Sinn Fein might most immediately achieve, that is, the substitution of Irish for English capital, would be "a stage of progress" (Idem.) since an Irish proletariat was yet to be created. At the same time Joyce announced, "If the Irish programme did not insist on the Irish language I suppose I could call myself an exile and, prophetically, a repudiated one" (Idem.). Such 1906 sentiments were part of the line of thinking Joyce took up a year later in a lecture delivered in Trieste at the Università Popolare on the subject of Irish political and cultural history. There, in "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages," he maintained that "No one



who has any self-respect stays in Ireland, but flees afar as though from a country that has undergone the visitation of an angered Jove" (CW, p. 171).

Despite such acknowledgments, it is clear that Joyce's early attitude toward his country and toward himself as an Irish writer was ambivalent. His correspondence with Nora during his 1909 and 1912 returns to Dublin underscore the mixture of repulsion and attraction he obviously experienced. Even as he remarked on the detestable nature of the city and its population and on his own alienation from his homeland (L2, pp. 239, 243, 255), Joyce had not yet relinquished all claims to being an Irish writer who might attain stature among his countrymen. Such notions, however, were soon dispelled. The fate of Dubliners in the hands of the publishing firm of Maunsel & Co. made it most evident that he was not going to be recognized by his compatriots as "the great writer of the future in my country" (Ibid., p. 248) or as "one of the writers of this generation who are perhaps creating at last a conscience in the soul of this wretched race" (Ibid., p. 311). The worst chapter in the eight years of litigation which preceded Dubliners' publication, the treatment of the manuscript by a Dublin-based Irish press and an Irish printer involved not only extremes in censorship and commercial wrangling but the virtual destruction of one thousand copies of the book. Joyce had described the work as "an attempt to represent certain aspects of the life of one of the European capitals" (Ibid., p. 109). It was to be recognized as a chapter in his country's moral history set in the center of its paralysis, Dublin (Ibid., pp. 105, 123). Not surprisingly, the mishandling of Dubliners





in Joyce's home city proved catalytic for the final severing of all physical ties with Ireland.<sup>24</sup>

By the time Ulysses was under way the permanence of Joyce's exile was an incontrovertible fact of his existence. The political neutrality which followed was, to some extent, in compliance with the promise of non-participation in any activity hostile to the emperor exacted by the Austrian authorities in exchange for permission to leave for Switzerland. Nevertheless, even before it seemed physically necessary to seek safety in a non-aligned country, Joyce declared his neutrality from current international developments and from all political systems and ideologies. To his friend Alessandro Francini Bruni around the beginning of May 1915, when Italy had entered the war, Joyce expressed an aversion to monarchies and republics alike and a skepticism toward the socialism he had briefly looked upon with favor. Best summed up by biographer Ellmann, Joyce's attitude toward the war itself was one of supreme indifference "to the result and, so long as gunfire could not be heard, to the conflict itself." Subsequent life in Zurich was marked by non-involvement with political matters and silence about the European situation beyond Swiss borders. This was not, however, extended toward events in Ireland. As Ellmann informs us, the Easter Rebellion of 1916 provoked a series of mixed reactions--a sense of futility with regard to its effectiveness, compassion, and some temporary nationalistic fervor--while heightening the complex balance of bitterness and nostalgia that dominated Joyce's sentiments about his country.<sup>25</sup>

Given this background, the Joycean aesthetic allows for a very





particular relationship between art and external reality. Although the world of "sensible or intelligible matter"<sup>26</sup> enters into artistic production, it is largely the world of the artist's own subjective experience. Moreover, it serves as the raw material for an increasingly autonomous art. Before elucidating that art's epiphanic and static nature in Stephen Hero and the Portrait, Joyce articulated its essential nature in a rudimentary way while he was largely involved in the writing of poetry. Drawing a parallel between his own work and the mystery of the mass, particularly as celebrated on Holy Thursday and Good Friday in a drama that continued to impress Joyce throughout his life, he explained, "I am trying in my poems to give people some kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own."<sup>27</sup>

Exactly whom Joyce was to mean by "people" requires some obvious clarification with respect to his novels. The route taken from the Portrait to the Wake is one which undeniably coincides with the production of art for an increasingly narrow and initiated audience. Stephen Dedalus announced his intention to fly by the nets of nationality, language, and religion (P, p. 203); Joyce, interpreting the artist as an unfettered creator with allegiance and responsibility to his art alone, sought to avoid ensnarement by any extra-artistic concerns, including the kind of broad public accessibility that both Dos Passos and Döblin deemed necessary and desirable. On the whole it can be said that Joyce represents a position that the two writers so wrongly alleged to be his imitators deliberately sought to counteract.



Simultaneously, he epitomizes an antithetical approach to the problematic relationship between the bourgeois artist and society that is inherent in Modernism.

In his Classical Temper, an elaborate defense of Ulysses as a work revealing "a responsive openness to life, a firm grasp of the centrally human, a respect for the present reality we all share, an allegiance to the objective, and a mistrust of metaphysical or naturalistic 'realities' abstracted from the total complexity of human experience," S. L. Goldberg has argued that the Joycean aesthetic is essentially a focus for fundamental moral problems of central importance to both the Portrait and Ulysses (p. 32). These pertain to the "relations between art and life or (in slightly different terms) between the artist-as-man and the artist-as-artist" (p. 65). However, the art-life relationship depicted here and which Goldberg views as "inevitably among the central problems of any aesthetic in our post-Romantic era" (p. 45), is exorcized of its historical character, removed from its specific societal points of reference, and interpreted exclusively from a generalizing, humanistic perspective. In Ulysses, Goldberg maintains, the aesthetic seeks a balance between the kind of dissociation of art as stasis that is the formalistic Dedalean variety and art as association or, more precisely, a Bloom-like engagement in daily existence (p. 64). Be that as it may, art's involvement with daily existence, especially the types of domestic and physical experience which largely make up Bloomsday, does not admit of its necessary confrontation with historically conditioned mass experience. Moreover, the problem of the artist-as-man and artist-as-artist is not equivalent





to that of the artist-as-man-and-artist-in-society with which Döblin and Dos Passos were concerned.

For the German and the American, to whom such confrontation proved central and problematic in the search for self-definition and for clarification of artistic form and function, Ulysses demonstrated not so much what but how to write. In this respect Döblin and Dos Passos focused on the work's essential nature. More than anything else, Ulysses is the product of its author's preoccupation with that same subject, albeit from a slightly different perspective. Joyce himself, it should be noted, proved extremely taciturn on novel-writing per se, so much so that it is difficult to gain any distinct impression of his view of the genre. From the slight testimony that does exist, it is obvious that he reserved his deepest admiration for such nineteenth-century continental writers as Flaubert, Tolstoy, Jacobsen, and D'Annunzio. Among English-language novelists he esteemed the eighteenth-century pioneers, notably Defoe and Sterne. For their descendents, whose characterizations, idiom and depicted situations he found hackneyed and false, however, he had little use.<sup>28</sup> His own example in Ulysses, a kind of rebuttal to the Hardy-esque mode, furnished proof to Dos Passos and Döblin that obsolescence in novel-writing could be overcome. Its lesson was perceived by both the American and the German through the prism of their own priorities.

"Knocking established ideas on the novel into a cocked hat with his Ulysses,"<sup>29</sup> Joyce especially offered Dos Passos vigorous, directly expressive writing. McLuhan, despite his limited focus on the Joyce-Dos Passos relationship, is nevertheless close to the truth in suggesting



that Dos Passos appears to have read Joyce "as it were through the eyes of Whitman and Sandburg."<sup>30</sup> More accurately perhaps, Dos Passos' growing inclination toward a broadly reconciliatory novel led him to focus on those Ulyssean features capable of facilitating that novel's realization. According to his "informal memoir," Dos Passos did not find Joyce's work uniformly impressive (BT, p. 143). Furthermore, other retrospective commentary from 1939 and 1961 indicates that he distinguished between the "objective" interprise which attracted him and the novel of largely interior dimensions Joyce built from "Pedantry and introversion" (14C, p. 522). Its subjective emphasis and sometimes extraneous components reminded him of Tristram Shandy.<sup>31</sup> Whether or not such differentiation was uppermost in his mind at the time of his 1922 reading of Ulysses is obviously impossible to ascertain. In light of the concerns and artistic priorities distinguishing Dos Passos' development in the early twenties, however, it is imperative to recognize that Ulysses was indeed exemplary but in a restricted way.

Döblin's more substantially documented response to Ulysses is not much different. The 1928 Ulysses review expressed the opinion that Joyce was not to be imitated, that the route had more than one track to it. As an Experimentierwerk Ulysses served as a percussive, so to speak, of essential elements and an indication of what lay ahead: "Mit diesem Buch wird vielen der Star gestochen; sie können nun sehen, was für ein Handwerk sie in ihren truben Stuben betreiben" (AzL, p. 288). Precisely what the writer's trade now entailed was not mere technical innovation. It was the creation of novels marked by the fusion of form and content, both of which had been drawn from the nature of modern





life and the unique physiognomy of the age. Like that of Dos Passos, Döblin's reading of Ulysses clearly reflects his priorities as a writer of novels. Not surprisingly, much of what he advances about Ulysses<sup>32</sup> has a direct connection with his own work. For this very reason, it affords a most convenient point of departure from which to pursue the Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer-Alexanderplatz relationship further.

Many of those characteristics Döblin saw in Ulysses--its comprehensiveness, its coalescence of form and subject, its association with actual phenomena long ignored by many writers--describe his own and Dos Passos' novel as well. Neither Manhattan Transfer nor Berlin Alexanderplatz can claim the distinction sometimes assigned to Ulysses: the summation of Western knowledge and a total living organism. Moreover, it is clear that neither Manhattan Transfer nor Alexanderplatz was designed, as Joyce quipped his Ulysses was, "To keep the critics busy for three hundred years."<sup>33</sup> But in their own ways the American and German works are total presentations which lean toward encyclopedism. Handbooks of diverse styles, varieties of language, and presentational modes, they are also distinct expansions of the novel's artistic character. Within their broad associational frameworks their narratives proper become multidimensional presentations of experience. They also possess the prevailing character of formal expressiveness by which the qualities of the subject matter are absorbed as the novel's formal features. Such parallels are seconded by shared illustrations of the Modernist condition's non-formal aspect, its fragmented apprehension of reality. It clearly manifests itself in the changed character-milieu relationships within the works. That apprehension comes most directly





into play and exhibits its most telling effects in the manner in which all three works project an ordering of modern experience through recourse to non-contemporary analogies. It is here that the contradictions and ambiguity in the work of Dos Passos and Döblin are especially revealed. Here too, works which were conceived as resolutions for Modernism's inherent dilemma show up their most profound points of similarity and difference with respect to each other and to Ulysses.

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## Encyclopedism: The Novel as a Total Presentation

From differing vantage points historians and theorists of the novel have often established its traditional association with totality. In The Rise of the Novel, his study of the prose genre's eighteenth-century middle-class English origins, Ian Watt, for example, posits "exhaustive presentation rather than . . . elegant concentration" as one of its principal features. For his part, an earlier observer usually given to non-literary speculations, Friedrich Hegel, considered that "die moderne bürgerliche Epopoë" offered a total world in its richness and multifaceted variety as well as the epic representation of events. It did so while severed from that irretrievable state in which life's wholeness and essence were intuited and everywhere apparent, that world view and fundamental situation from which true epic emerged. Nearly a century later, after the novel had become Western literature's major genre, a pre-Marxist Lukács took up the Hegelian line and pursued it further. According to him, the novel was the epic of an age in which life's extensive totality was no longer directly obvious and in which the immanence of meaning in life had become a problem. Nevertheless, the genre was the product of an age still disposed to thinking in terms of totality. For Lukács, who drew some of his conclusions from the example of the classical Bildungsroman, the novel's inner form arose from the journey toward self-recognition undertaken by the problematic separate individual. The search for life's meaning that was objectivized as the not always successful seeker-hero's psychology provided the novel with its structural core. By creating its own totality, the novel now

# The Great Wall of China

by Herodotus

Translated by E. V. Rieu

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sought to simultaneously uncover and construct the meaning and totality of life itself.<sup>34</sup> Whether viewed in Lukács' quest for wholeness by a non-integrated civilization or in Watt's diffuseness approximating a transcription of actuality then, the novel inclines toward a total presentation of life.

If the claim seems especially applicable to the novel in some of its eighteenth and nineteenth-century manifestations, it acquires a new significance for those twentieth-century examples that concern us here. The novelistic priorities established by Döblin and Dos Passos derive from fresh preoccupations with art's incorporation of the details of an actuality whose particulars and essential nature were held to be different from those of past experience. That actuality's transcription and absorption, however, were incomplete so long as unaccompanied by the interpretation and communication of its meaning. Consequently, the broadly reconciliatory novels envisaged by Dos Passos and Döblin are also those which intensify its all-inclusive and transparent character.

The extent to which totality and revelation materialize in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz provides initial insights into their relationship with Ulysses. Anchored by the identifiable data of urban industrial experience, the American and German novels furnish that life's multiplicity of detail. At the same time, like Ulysses, they generalize experience so that its particularity becomes obscured by its representative features. The most obvious illustration of the process resides in the schematic exploitation of their narrative foundations.



Recognizable in retrospect, as in Ulysses and Manhattan Transfer, and anticipated from the outset, as in Alexanderplatz, the novels arrange themselves around variants of that most ancient and well-known motif whose nineteenth-century metamorphosis attracted Lukács: the journey. Implicit in the title Joyce attached to his novel, it is also evoked by the mass transit associations of the names Dos Passos and Döblin conferred upon their works. For all its labyrinthine meanderings, Joyce's Dublin odyssey marks out nearly nineteen hours in the lives of Bloom and the two lesser protagonists. Its progression through the book's three formal sections and eighteen episodic subdivisions moves in chronological order on this level toward and then away from the day's two major events: the cuckolding of Bloom and the Bloom-Dedalus meeting. Alexanderplatz is far more traditional in its narrative affiliations. The fact is incontrovertibly demonstrated by its announcement Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf, the subtitle Döblin added at his editor's insistence that Berlin Alexanderplatz, the name of a railway station, was inadequate (AzL, p. 390). Determined by the sequence of events in one life from the late summer of 1927 through the autumn of 1928, the course of Alexanderplatz proceeds through nine books and their respective subsections mapping out major stages in the depicted existence: release from Tegel prison, the vicissitudes of life in lower class and underworld Berlin, nervous collapse, and subsequent restoration to health and social integration.

Compared to the varieties associated with Ulysses and Alexanderplatz, the foundation of Manhattan Transfer is not one that permits exclusive identification with any of the numerous figures, named and





anonymous, who appear and often reappear throughout its pages, whose paths usually cross, and whose lives are frequently interconnected. Among the novel's forty-odd recurring characters, approximately half of whom receive some extended development, Jimmy Herf, Ellen Thatcher, and George Baldwin are the most visibly prominent. Of the trio itself, it is Herf who approximates something of a center of interest. Nevertheless, Manhattan Transfer's fundamental line of development actually emerges from the pattern created by its more than 130 interlocking narrative units. It is built up from situations in which characters making either solo or multiple appearances enact aspects of their lives within the metropolitan arena and a thirty-five-year time frame. An elaboration of the progression evident in the first of the novel's three major formal divisions, the total sequence describes a mass encounter with the city that moves from anticipation through actualization and outcome.

Already conspicuous in Manhattan Transfer's collective pattern is an indication of how the novel begins to assume broader dimensions. More than anything else, the foundation has a representative value as a vehicle for expansion and elaboration in a multidimensional narrative. In Manhattan Transfer it is less a matter of the private and banal fortunes of individuals than what their fates and metropolitan encounters collectively signify. Absorbing and abstracting multiple particulars, they become notations for the essential features of urban life. Through them too the myths and realities of national experience are reconstructed in the juxtaposition of expectations and contradictions within a broad historical sweep. However, the collective journey does not stop here





but reaches further back in time. A series of non-contemporary reverberations helps outline an itinerary from "New Jerusalem" (MT, p. 101) to "City of Destruction" (Ibid., p. 366) that sets a sixteenth-century secular vision against its twentieth-century fruits.

Adhering more closely to the contours of Lukács' "interior biography," the route in Alexanderplatz is somewhat more well-worn.<sup>35</sup> Forewarned from the outset that this is the story "vom Franz Biberkopf," we soon have few doubts about the representative value of the life set before us. Particularized in connection with its specific east Berlin locale, it is also collectivized through all the urban affiliations established for it in the direct presentation of Berlin as a broad arena of life. More important, however, Döblin's variant of the encounter with the metropolis, a year in the life of an allegedly "grober, ungeschlachter Mann von abstossendem Äussern" (BA, p. 46) becomes via the novel's didactic archaistic frame a veritable twentieth-century Jedermann auf berlinisch. Its exemplary feature is established in the Moritat-like prologue, prefatory book summations, chapter headings, and the frequent and various assurances by the predominantly colloquial, chatty narrative voice that "es ist kein beliebiger Mann, dieser Franz Biberkopf" (p. 47). Underpinning from the variety of biblical props marking out a route from Creation to Last Judgment as well as from assorted classical and folkloric supports further enhances the novel's generalizing aspect and its retreat from private existence.

Although private existence is far more central to Ulysses than to Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz, what transpires in the American and German novels has its most elaborate counterpart in Joyce's work.



As we are only too aware from Joyce's own correspondence (L2, pp. 146-147) and the testimony of his intimates, Ulysses was painstakingly executed as much more than the modern-day odyssey of a Dublin advertising canvasser. Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz artistically reconstruct, so to speak, the specific material conditions of modern existence and then generalize them to expose a meaning that reflects back on the new actualities with which man in society now had to reckon. Toward both the reality and totality of life Ulysses takes a rather different approach. In integrating its narrative within a vast and complex network of cross references, allusions, and parallels, it approximates an analogue not of modern but of generalized and allegedly universal human existence that moves from the realm of the purely physical through the domains of intellect and spirit. By now few would argue for the necessity, desirability, and even the possibility of recognizing each and every component of the work whose "oversystematization" Joyce himself was not unwilling to concede.<sup>36</sup> More important than their plentitude are the implications of that abundance.

In its unique version of encyclopedism Ulysses exploits its base as a paradigm of reality which in itself, as Samuel Beckett perceptively remarked, struck Joyce as paradigmatic or "an illustration of a possibly unstable rule." Biographer Ellmann has proposed that rule to be "the perception of coincidence," according to which, "reality, no matter how much we try to manipulate it, . . . can only assume certain forms; the roulette wheel brings up the same numbers again and again; everyone and everything shift about in continual movement, yet movement limited in its possibilities." Preponderant here are variations and





sameness in time and in place combined with unexpected simultaneities.

"The characters pass through sequences of situations and thoughts bound by coincidence with the situations and thoughts of other living and dead men and of fictional, mythical men." Doing so, they exemplify a universal process.<sup>37</sup> These assertions are borne out by the amplification of Ulysses' foundations. As a repository, for example, of the possible varieties of domestic experience which by and large subsumes all other forms in Ulysses, its base narrative is totally divested of historical particularity. Ultimately, as we shall see from the specific interpretive consequences of the experiential totality projected in all three novels, an apparent present in Ulysses is generalized in a way that is equally impossible for both an historically bound Manhattan Transfer and an Alexanderplatz that wavers between a bondage to and a liberation from history.

Other effects are produced by the expanded chronicles of slightly less than one day, two years, and three decades in the lives of Leopold Bloom, Franz Biberkopf, and assorted New Yorkers. Within their narratives infusion of detail sets up an interplay of particularity and abstraction that constantly calls attention to itself. Unrivalled in its embrace of minutiae, Joyce's "tesselated mosaic" has been likened on one level alone to "A huge and intricate machine clanking and whirring for eighteen hours . . .," assigned "to a world of gears and sidewalks, of bricks laid side by side, of data thrust into a computer and whirled through permutations baffling to the imagination but always traceable by careful reason," and even envisaged as a kind of monstrous parody of the super-brain's workings and its "insane



mechanical meticulousness."<sup>38</sup> With regard to its base narrative, the tendency is so pronounced that it reveals Ulysses as a kind of caricature of Naturalism's tendency toward expanded content and minute description.

Although presented piecemeal so that we must reconstruct the character from his component inlaid fragments, the features composing Bloom the advertising canvasser are exhaustive. By the time Ulysses is read or, perhaps more accurately, reread, diverse means have been employed to communicate such information to us. In combination with each other, the frequently modulated narrative voice, the perspectives of the inhabitants of Bloom's world, the unmediated offerings of his interior monologue, and the Nighttown exteriorization of his inner life have provided a thorough personal and family history and also exposed us to his physical routines, his intellectual and emotional preoccupations, and his physiognomy. We have been made aware of how he eats, defecates, sleeps, thinks, and fantasizes, are conversant with his opinions on religion, nationalism, sex, and his reactions to birth and death. While thus particularized, however, Bloom becomes so diffuse as to lose all visibility.

Embracing within him the contrarities of "Everyman and Noman,"<sup>39</sup> Bloom of "the firm full masculine feminine active passive hand" (U, p. 674) accumulates layer upon layer of attributes, many of them contradictory. On the work's naturalistic level a prominent example of the process can be found in Bloom's Jewishness. The feature which many have unquestionably accepted is, as Ellmann frequently reveals in his biography, a fusion of multiple sources: Victor Bérard's postulation





of Semitic (that is, Phoenician) origins for the Odyssey; the full, partial, and reputedly Jewish backgrounds of some of Bloom's diverse real life models; Joyce's conviction that Greeks and Jews strongly resembled each other in many of their mannerisms and habits; and finally his limited accumulation of exotic facts and sometimes laughable conclusions about Jews. But in Ulysses Bloom's Jewishness is largely an illustration of Sartre's observation that "Le Juif est un homme que les autres prennent pour juif." As some have noted, the presently agnostic, formerly twice-baptized son of an Irish Protestant mother and Hungarian Jewish father, himself a former Catholic convert and subsequent apostate, has a fairly limited notion of things Jewish and of himself as a Jew. Moreover, according to Jewish dogma, Bloom's maternal ancestry makes him a non-Jew, just as Molly's descent from the mysterious Lunita Laredo of suggested Sephardic origin does exactly the reverse for her. Within the text itself this contradictory facet of Bloom's identity is summarized in a series of negations used to recount the nature of "Bloom's thoughts about Stephen's thoughts about Bloom and Bloom's thoughts about Stephen's thoughts about Bloom's thoughts about Stephen": "He thought that he thought that he was a jew whereas he knew that he knew that he knew that he was not" (p. 682). Pursuing the point any further, however, seems fruitless. The subject is comparable to Molly's intimate life, something which has been scrutinized for the purpose of precisely enumerating extramarital contacts with the degree of dedication heretofore reserved for the Virgin Mary. In either case a text which continuously reworks and elaborates the evidence of alleged and actual tribal and sexual





affiliations quickly disperses the fundamental facts.<sup>40</sup>

This kind of dispersal through accumulation reflects the transformational process that is so exaggerated in the Nighttown episode. This very process also informs the whole of Ulysses. Initiated in the opening passages where Buck Mulligan deliberately assumes multiple roles by changing his pose and language, it is epitomized by the gypsies' dog which, during Stephen's walk along the beach, becomes the protean animal (pp. 46-47).<sup>41</sup> Among the human components in Ulysses the process most frequently and consistently affects Bloom. To some extent he himself shares directly in its workings by imagining himself, for example, gentleman farmer (pp. 714-715), alderman, chief magistrate, and emperor of the new Bloomusalem (pp. 481-482) and by attempting to play the role of Don Juan. On a grand scale the consequences are exhibited by the numerous allusions and parallels surrounding his person. Depending upon their manner of presentation, they expand and diminish Bloom's proportions, sometimes within the space of a single paragraph. Effects are most apparent in his mock-heroic translation as Elijah following the attack by the Citizen and his mongrel Garryown (p. 345). These metamorphoses simultaneously reduce and ultimately obscure the visibility of the Dubliner's outlines as he takes on, for example, the features of stock figures of melodrama, pulp romances, and vaudeville or else the attributes of Odysseus, Moses, Jesus, Wandering Jew, and Sinbad. In the course of its peregrinations Bloom's mind may quickly range anywhere from the habits of bats and birds to the effectiveness of repetition in prayer and advertising or to the causes of spontaneous combustion (p. 378). As is commonly acknowledged,



it thereby exhibits itself as a kind of Book of Knowledge stocked with information and misinformation of the most heterogeneous sort; during his day's journey, however, Bloom himself becomes a veritable walking Who's Who. In a work that has been aptly described as "Joyce's Metamorphoses," a vast embrace of roles, guises, identity games, transubstantiations and all-pervasive pantomime in which polytropia is distributed and incarnated throughout,<sup>42</sup> Bloom undergoes far-reaching collectivization. For scope this collectivization of the individual has no counterpart in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of particularity and abstraction that occurs in the American and German novels also contributes toward a diffusion in focus and underscores their narrative's representative nature.

From the outset Manhattan Transfer obliterates traditional character focus in its rapid shifts from figure to figure. For none of these does Dos Passos' novel offer anything remotely resembling the Ulyssean view. Instead, it quickly covers the essential features that endow a metropolitan population with its contours. What emerges is a crowded surface of urban shapes. Even when we are able to piece together a two-decade personal history from its discontinuous and fragmentary presentation, we come up largely with outlines. This is the case with Ellen Thatcher and Jimmy Herf. Passing before us at different stages of their lives, they are exhibited in a variety of personal guises and social roles, many of them summarized by the successive name changes each undergoes along the way. The excitable Ellen Thatcher with Peter Pan and "Elaine of Lammermoor" aspirations, for example, becomes new bride "Elaine Thatcher Oglethorpe," upcoming actress/estranged wife





"Elaine Oglethorpe," new mother/ex-Red Cross volunteer/Manners' editor "Helena Herf," the "Ellie" and "Elaine" of assorted men's affections, and the nameless visitor to Dr. Abrahms' abortion clinic. Similarly, Jimmy Herf is displayed as the unhappy prep school "Herfy," alienated nephew "James," and the "Herf" casually known to colleagues and peers. "Jimmy" to mother, friends, and most intimates, he is also Ellie's "Jimps" and the "James Herf" of his own fantasies. Despite the multiple perspectives attendant with such development, however, Ellen Thatcher and Jimmy Herf largely remain the sum of their respective outlines. Cliché-speaking urban stereotypes, they conform to fairly predictable biographical patterns, the one as a self-centered careerist, the other a disillusioned young writer. As such they complement all the other figures who fill up Dos Passos' New York canvas.

That population is a hybrid mix. It comprehends historically verifiable types, a good number of them fleetingly etched in only a few words (for example, Ellis Island arrivals, returning war veterans, deportees). They are joined by reproductions of what E. D. Lowry has suggested as the stock figures of mass entertainment easily recognizable from film, the popular stage, and vaudeville.<sup>43</sup> Lowry's proposed list of "political boss" (Gus McNiel), "ham actor" (Jojo Oglethorpe), "tired businessman" (George Baldwin), and stage ethnics (the newly beardless Jew of "Ferryslip," the delicatessan proprietress Mme. Rigaud) can be extended considerably. Manhattan Transfer reveals it to be sufficiently broad to encompass such extremes as the brief "man in the derby" (p. 342) notation for a plainclothes detective and the more full-bodied down-and-out ex-tycoon (Joe Harland). Their separate visibilities



limited to their defining traits and situations, these character sketches form the details of a living milieu and the features of the city's physiognomy. As that physiognomy takes shape and their individual particularity diminishes, the finished product approximates a kind of massive cartoon configuration. Given Dos Passos' early assessment of New York as a caricature of the contrasts it embraced and the machine culture it epitomized, the result is not entirely surprising.

Interaction of detail and outline are no less apparent in Alexanderplatz. Lacking the elaborate naturalistic dimensions of a Bloom and reduced to contours by the colloquial narrator, Franz Biberkopf is none the less allotted sufficient specificity in his discontinuous biography to grant him the kind of inner and outer definition Manhattan Transfer provides, shall we say, for an Anna Cohen. But the features that describe Franz the individual have little value compared to their extension beyond his solitary shape. Bloom already amasses a number of roles even in his 1904 domestic experience as "Poldy-Henry Flower-Papli-Leopold"; a figure like Manhattan Transfer's Congo Jake en route from French cabin boy to Park Avenue bootlegger "Armand Duval" gathers in one person a variety of social types. Similarly, as the creation of a writer who had long rejected artistic emphasis on individual existence and individual fortunes, Franz is a multiple incarnation. On the narrative's naturalistic level he may collect only two aliases, that of Franz Räcker who died during the 1922 riots (BA, p. 278) and the Herr Klemens seeking medical help after Mieke's death (p. 435). However, on the same level he accumulates numerous callings and related non-vocational associations. In the space of a year and a half, the





war veteran, former cement-and-transport worker, ex-convict, and furniture mover becomes an itinerant tradesman, the peddler of pornographic magazines and Aryan propaganda, boozier, handyman, newspaper vendor, criminal lookout, womanizer, pimp, fence, asylum patient, and assistant doorman in a medium-sized factory. By undergoing these literal metamorphoses, he presents a kind of summa of Lumpenproletariat possibilities. As he becomes an abstraction of his living milieu, he simultaneously loses separate visibility.

Character generalization in Alexanderplatz as well as in Manhattan Transfer and Ulysses has its counterpart in the amplification of the novels' arena of activity. Here, however, there are important distinctions to be made that reflect back on the milieu's inhabitants. The varieties of urban man which form the raw material of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz, either as embodiments of the clichés and contrasts of American capitalist industrialism or as Berlin's actively emerging urban lower class, are inseparable from the massive industrial centers Dos Passos and Döblin equated with modern experience. In the realities of such centers both Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz find their points of departure. Despite customary claims that Bloom epitomizes urban man and Dublin his abode, neither city-dweller nor city in Ulysses is comparable to the varieties encountered in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. Its essential nature captured in the cross section portrayal of "Wandering Rocks," the Dublin "of gossipy, leisurely life" Joyce once described to Budgen was vastly different from Europe's largest urban center, a London of seven million inhabitants.<sup>44</sup> Joyce's Dublin was, in fact, hardly a twentieth-century city at all in the



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sense that such affiliations can be ascribed to Dos Passos' New York and Döblin's Berlin. Ulysses may situate us "IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS" (U, p. 116), but turn-of-the-century "DEAR DIRTY DUBLIN" (p. 145) is small, intimate, and compact. Bloom may speculate that "Machines. . . . Rule the world today" (p. 118), but there is little of the machine age honeycomb about the Dublin through which he moves. Less still is there an actual resemblance between its denizens and their New York and Berlin counterparts. Whereas the urban creatures of Dos Passos and Döblin are the issue of new and different realities, Joyce's city-dwellers are ultimately the product of unchanging old ones, namely, those of human experience in its recurrence and continuity. Given such distinctions, however, the cities in Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz directly contribute to the novels' expansion as a total presentation.

Much publicity has been granted Joyce's desire to give such a complete picture of Dublin that if the city disappeared from the earth one day, it could be reconstructed from his book. Recorded by Budgen, the remark has inspired readers of Ulysses to demonstrate that its Dublin does indeed correspond to the legitimate 1904 historical version. Yet if Ulysses' Dublin is rooted in fact and many of its inhabitants based upon real citizens, it is no less true, as Bernard Benstock has pointedly observed, that the only Dublin to be reconstructed from Ulysses is the one originating in Joyce's creative imagination. Joyce himself indirectly implied as much in his Zurich confession to Heinrich Straumann that he carried his city around within him always.<sup>45</sup> Be that as it may, a Dublin portrait emerges from Ulysses that reveals



the same juxtaposition of particularity and generalization already detected in its characters.

Dublin's particulars are etched out through its "gossipy, leisurely" inhabitants whose social habits, political, economic, and cultural preoccupations create the city's distinguishing traits. Landmarks are present everywhere as characters pass, enter, exit from, refer to, or merely see them. More often than not, their description is non-existent. When present, such descriptions are usually indirect. "Wandering Rocks," for example, refers to "the blind columned porch of the bank of Ireland where pigeons roococooed" (U, p. 228) and "the stern stone hand of Grattan, bidding halt" (Idem.). But edifices and geography do not imbue Ulysses with a sense of place. That arises largely from its living components. Not all of them are human, as the newspaper and printing press in "Aeolus" clearly attest. From them too we receive the details of the city's life on June 16, 1904 in the notations of everything from its weather to its public amusements.

The metropolitan facts that confront us in Ulysses are multiplied in Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer. While Ulysses offers a one-day Dublin time capsule, two years' and several decades' worth of popular Berlin and New York artifacts are compressed within the covers of Döblin's and Dos Passos' novels. Here too the quotidian is given space. Weather reports, public diversions, and municipal events are relayed through the characters' speech, habits, and preoccupations, and conveyed in the direct and varied incorporation of the artifacts themselves within the text. As in Ulysses, the city's terrain and its identifiable landmarks are sketchily mapped out en route while Dos





Passos' New Yorkers traverse Manhattan Island and sometimes cross the East River into Brooklyn, and while Döblin's Berliners largely move around their city's populous and commercial eastern sections. Because of the broader time span covered in the German and American novels, we glimpse more of the city phenomena and see those changes in them that mirror alterations in the city itself.

Change in conjunction with the passage of time is easily detected in Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer. The novels abound with overt references to calendars and dates, to events of international, national, and municipal significance, thereby establishing a historical chronology as well as one for the city. The metropolitan variety is also recorded in the city's growth. In Alexanderplatz it is expressed, for example, by the construction on Elsasser Strasse and in the subway excavations around the Alex. Far more pronounced in Manhattan Transfer, the tendency reveals itself in a transformation from a city "of brick" to one of "steel an [sic] glass" (MT, p. 75). Early in Manhattan Transfer the signing of the Greater New York Charter (May 4, 1897) gives the city the geographical distinction of "The world's second metropolis" (p. 13). At the book's conclusion expansion has progressed beyond the acquisition of land to that of vertical space as well. In contrast, although Ulysses is equally time-conscious, its urban time has little of this kind of change within it. Dublin's time capsule is enlarged by the continuity of past and present.

To the extent that Ulysses' Dublin is not merely its 1904 manifestation but the sum of its historical experience, it is not drastically different from certain nineteenth-century forerunners, such



as Balzac's Paris where the architecture and the generations themselves continuously layer the present with the past. History in its static Irish translation is everpresent in Ulysses. Hardly a scene transpires without some evocation of it, not through conventional narrative description but again, like the city's physical landscape, largely through the medium of Dublin's inhabitants. Beginning with the early morning response to Haines that attributes the Martello tower's construction to "Billy Pitt . . . when the French were on the sea" (p. 17), eighteenth and nineteenth-century Dublin and, by extension, an Ireland of conquest and abortive risings are never far from view. This kind of mooring of the present in the past continues through the day. It may, for example, take shape as Mulligan's brief acknowledgment of the chess player in the D.B.C. as Charles Stewart Parnell's brother (p. 248). Just as easily, it occurs in the conversations, thoughts, songs, and obsessions of the city's 1904 inhabitants. Even the alleged outsider Bloom, during the morning graveyard musings, manages to conjure up Robert Emmet (1778-1803) and the same Parnell whose hat he once retrieved. But history also goes further back before the British conquest to a time when Ireland had its "eyes on Europe" (p. 327), as the walking encyclopedia of chauvinist clichés, the Citizen, reminds us. The incorporation of such data, data subjected to all manner of Ulyssean metamorphoses, inflates the city's proportions and its population. To paraphrase Bloom, Dublin becomes all those who once walked around in it (p. 113), whether in fact or popular fancy. Its inhabitants also include all those non-Irish participants in Ulysses' experience for whom the modern Dubliners serve as repositories. Indeed, as Bloom





becomes all-inclusive, so does the city, its boundaries expanding far beyond the Irish generalization it receives. Ultimately the arena in which timeless human drama in all its contrarities and equivalences is re-enacted, Dublin itself recedes from view.

Compared to the metropolis in Ulysses, the city in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz is not a storehouse of its past. Nor could it ever be; the formation of its essential character as portrayed in the novels is decidedly recent. Döblin, who denied that Berlin's true nature in the 1920s resembled the visible legacy inherited from its multitude of deceased, incorporates little of that legacy in Alexanderplatz. For the most part Berlin's landmarks rarely predate that late nineteenth-century evidence of the commercial and industrial center (for example, Wertheim's, the A.E.G.) that Fontane's archaic city portrait ignored. In Döblin's novel an expanded A.E.G. and the UFA-Palast clearly prevail over the Tiergarten. When vestiges of old Berlin appear, they do so in a markedly present context. The city's historic gates, for example, serve as briefly noted points of entry in movement toward the central and younger eastern districts; elsewhere old Berlin makes way for the new as, for example, the Berolina statue disappears during the subway work on the Alex (BA, p. 179). Moreover, for the purposes of Alexanderplatz, the city's past actually dates back no further than a decade from the years in which the Biberkopf action occurs. In a manner of speaking, the history of its citizens predates that of Berlin. They emerge from 1914-18. This is obvious from the recollections of the novel's many war veterans, all of them closer to the variety represented by Manhattan Transfer's Dutch





Robertson of an A.W.O.L. army history and postwar unemployment than to the same novel's affluent "ninety-day wonder" James Merivale. Having filled the ranks of the Prussian infantry, they may, in the manner of Spartacist sympathizer Georg Dreske reacting negatively to Franz's Nazi armband, imply that lessons were learned from Arras (BA, p. 88); they may, like the disabled father of the four-year-old killed by medical neglect, conclude "Uns lässt man warten, wir sind Kulis, unsere Kinder können verrecken, wie wir verreckt sind" (p. 122). Finally, they may, like Franz, remember the eventual deterioration of discipline and morale, and the hurried desertion of soldiers like himself and Dreske from the trenches (p. 90). As for Berlin itself, however, history begins with the autumn of 1918.

Like the previous four years outside Berlin, the more recent past within the city is recapitulated through the voices of assorted Berliners. Despite the diversity of their viewpoints, they formulate common conclusions. Dreske, for example, explains to Franz that they were betrayed in 1918 by the same "big shots" responsible for the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (p. 90). Emphasizing their betrayal, an interpolated Nazi address to "fellow Germans" poses the question, "Wisst ihr noch, wie Scheidemann am 9. November 1918 von der Fensterbrüstung des Reichstags uns Frieden, Freiheit und Brot versprach?" (p. 131); an anarchist orator scores the corruption and capitulation of the Reichstag's Social Democratic majority (p. 292); and Franz himself summarizes 1918-22 with the following observations: "Vier Jahr nach achtzehn war ich in Berlin. Länger hat vorher der ganze Kreig nicht gedauert, stimmt doch, . . . und haben wir hier was



von Arras gemerkt, etwa du? Haben gehabt Inflation, Papierscheine, Millionen, Billionen, kein Fleisch, keine Butter, schlimmer als vorher, das haben wir alles gemerkt" (p. 88). Such a synopsis has the effect of amplifying the city's present and, by extension, that of the society at large as the non-materialization of recent history's hopeful promise.

Similar effects are far more pronounced in Manhattan Transfer. The transformation of the "New Jerusalem" into the "City of Destruction" is traced out in the course of the novel's development by the pattern of accommodations, defeats, and shallow victories that form the life of its inhabitants. In the novel's first section the affluent midtown matron tells Bud Korpenning that "This is certainly the city for everyone being from somewhere else" (p. 64). Its features, therefore, are not only those of New York but of the entire nation, and its experience is not exclusively metropolitan. Within Manhattan Transfer the chronology and specific facts of collective experience are clearly established, yet the details are important largely for their implications. The South Ferry arrival of new immigrants recently cleared through Ellis Island that is found in the opening section (pp. 76-77), for example, undergoes subsequent metamorphosis. In the final section we witness the Ellis Island ferry deportation of "undesirable aliens" (pp. 289-290). Similar transformations eventually mark the Italians who appear around Independence Day toward the middle of the century's first decade. We first meet them in their typical situation as disoriented newcomers, their sole connection with the New World formed by a relative's letter bearing a New York address. Later in the novel they re-emerge, so to speak, as their three quietly chatting compatriots





whose street corner arrest in the spring of 1920 is observed by Jimmy Herf and the tall man evicted from Child's (p. 370). Thus the "Dove andiamo . . .?" posed by the old woman in "Dollars" has a dual response. It finds its answer in the "Americanization" of her Sicilian wagon driver or in Sheepshead Bay bootlegger Mike Cardinale and also in that variety responsible for the May 1920 imprisonment of Sacco and Vanzetti.<sup>46</sup>

Outside their significance for the "land of opportunity" (p. 49) in the novel's thirty-five-year time span, the question and answer have even broader meanings. Partially demonstrated in the allusions to and popular clichés about Revolutionary principles, a distance of a century and a half is created in the discrepancy between far-off ideals and present reality. Early in Manhattan Transfer Jimmy Herf and his mother return to New York on July 4th. As their ship steams into the harbor and finally docks, the past is called forth in the pier celebrations that include the playing of "Yankee Doodle," and the reading of the Declaration of Independence, both of which elicit Lily Herf's reference to her colonial forebears (pp. 69-70). It is likewise recalled as the ship passes the Statue of Liberty Island when Lily invokes its official title, "Liberty enlighting the world." In doing so, she generalizes the Enlightenment outlook allegedly implicit in the country's foundations. By the time the novel has nearly ended and the goddess "holding up the lamp of liberty" (p. 396) has been associated with an increasingly mechanical Ellen Thatcher being outfitted by a couturier, that foundation is again recalled. This time, however, it appears in the challenge of a nearly thirty-year-old Jimmy's silent self-examination:



"What about your unalienable right, Thirteen Provinces" (p. 366)?

Uttered when Herf no longer has "faith in words" (Idem.), the Declaration of Independence paraphrasing points up the contrast between past expectations and present realization on a mass scale.

Further irony results from the additional diminution of Liberty. It is reduced to the caricature of the man whose wearing of a straw hat out of season brought about his death (p. 401). The new martyr, whose Philadelphia residence situates him in the historical center of revolutionary activity, serves as a convenient source of elaboration. Within Herf's interior monologue he is fused with an earlier rebel's well-known slogan and the international workers' holiday, a celebration which frequently saw the violent suppression of labor agitation during the hysteria of the Red Scare. In its way, "Give me liberty, said Patrick Henry, putting on his straw hat on the first of May, or give me death. And he got it" (p. 402) produces an even more condensed mixture of history and implicit commentary than Ulysses' Nighttown episode. There the day's display of history, legend, and popular myth rematerializes, and Dublin, the sum of its past and present, submits to a Walpurgisnacht-like metamorphosis (pp. 598-599). When armed heroes spring up from dragon's teeth and do battle with each other (p. 599), for example, Irish history is encapsulated as the combat of Joycean word plays. But it is also summarized as a battle among its most famous eighteenth (Fitzgerald, Tone, Grattan), nineteenth (O'Brien, O'Connell, Davitt, Butt, Parnell) and early twentieth-century martyrs and rebels (M'Carthy, Redmond, Griffith).

In Manhattan Transfer the expanded dimensions produced from





compressed detail can also be viewed in the aforementioned New Jerusalem-City of Destruction antithesis. On the one hand, exploitation of the Bunyanesque latter allusion in Herf's interior monologue emphasizes the novel's secularized reversal of Pilgrim's journey from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly Gates. A different effect is created by the heavenly associations of the "New Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:12, 21:2) satirically offered by Jimmy's aunt when her husband complains about the influx of impoverished non-Anglo-Saxon new arrivals from abroad. The combined antithesis ultimately furnishes one more reponse to the Italian woman's "Dove andiamo . . . ?" It is a reply which links the question with immigrants more than two centuries removed from the questioner, since the allusions also call forth the seventeenth-century Puritan world view of particular dissenters and non-conformists. Thus, an earlier transatlantic journey is, in a sense, mapped out. It proceeds from a vision partially responsible for democratic principles and from an ethic tied to the rise of modern capitalism through the latter-day consequences of both.

Their expanded historical dimensions by no means exhaust the encyclopedism of either Manhattan Transfer or Alexanderplatz. In both novels experiential totality projected through commonplace representative types and situations is also realized by artistic heterogeneity. The latter grants the works a multiform character. Through it Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz can be seen to have more in common with Ulysses than the traditionally cited exploitation of shared techniques. Like Joyce's novel, they not only incorporate the artifacts of artistic expression but assimilate their features in a





comprehensive manner. Distinctly different in emphasis and effect from Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz nevertheless reveal a similar expansion of the novel as a kind of Gesamtkunstwerk in which a unique fusion of form and content prevails.



## Formal Expressiveness: The Novel as a Comprehensive Art Work

Through its determination to create appropriate new forms and idioms, Modernism asserts the pre-eminence of expressiveness over all other aesthetic criteria, discarding along the way the kinds of traditional unity, order, and coherence that are the distinguishing standards of conventional realism.<sup>47</sup> The advancement of the new priority is attended by the shifting of boundaries within and between the arts. Traditional hierarchies, for example, break down as genres intermingle, the arts overlap, and the non-literary freely enters the domain of literature. It cannot be denied, of course, that throughout its development the Western novel has frequently shown signs of a protean nature by drawing techniques and features from other forms of imaginative literature and historical writing. Early attempts to confer legitimacy upon a bastard genre, dissociations of a particular work from its generic counterparts, and Romantic impulses toward artistic comprehensiveness or totale Dichtung readily attest to the adaptability that has marked the species for several centuries. Nevertheless, evolution under Modernism shows a marked increase in the annexation of non-novelistic attributes. In addition to intensifying the late nineteenth-century absorption of lyrical, dramatic, and "pictorial" traits, the novel reveals startling new accommodations. Its literary character is, in a number of cases, offset by one that runs directly counter to it. Inherent in each particular metamorphosis is a drive toward heightened expressiveness seeking a new and indissoluble coalescence between form and subject matter. As displayed in Manhattan Transfer





and Alexanderplatz, such a coalescence clearly allies them with Ulysses. At the same time, the distinguishing Modernist characteristic is intimately bound up with the American and German efforts to simultaneously create a novel that is as socially reconciliatory as it is artistically all-inclusive. Thus, the dramatic fusion between what is expressed and its manner of expression extends far beyond the interaction of specific stylistic, material, and thematic components.<sup>48</sup>

To be sure, the interaction of specific components should not be overlooked in either Manhattan Transfer or Alexanderplatz, since the dynamic potentiality of the word was of utmost importance to both Dos Passos and Döblin. In this respect they shared, perhaps not Joyce's extreme fascination with mechanics, but his recognition that style was essentially the expression of the subject rather than of the writer. That his attitude had a specific translation somewhat different from that of the German and the American, however, is evident in the particular identification of technique and subject matter dominating Joyce's maturity. It becomes especially pronounced in Ulysses from "Wandering Rocks" onward as the human drama of the earlier narrative is subordinated to the interplay of the constantly shifting styles and the feats of technical virtuosity.<sup>49</sup> The equation of subject and style is explicit in Joyce's comment on Budgen's inability to describe something of a contemporary writer's work in the work's own words. Using an analogy that his Zurich friend, a painter, might readily appreciate, Joyce offered: "When you talk painting to Taylor, Sargent or Suter you don't talk about the object represented but about the painting. It is the material that conveys the image of jug, loaf of bread, or whatever



it is, that interests you. And quite rightly, I should say, because that is where the beauty of the artist's thought and handiwork become one" (Budgen, p. 176). Less interested in the specifics of the aesthetic process than Joyce was, Döblin and Dos Passos undeniably talked as much, if not more, about the "object" as they did about its "painterly material."

For all that, novels founded on stylistic and representational flexibility in the quest for appropriate form reveal many variations of the linguistic immediacy so dear to Joyce. As in Ulysses, words in Manhattan Transfer and in Alexanderplatz take on the qualities of their subjects. Physical conditions and movement, for example, are sometimes approximated by the specific features and tempo of language. In Ulysses, for example, stale clichés, elongated and sparsely punctuated sentences (one of them left abruptly incomplete), and narrated monologue create a prose that is tired and befuddled. As such, even though offered from the third person perspective, language provides a subjective mirror. Reflected in it are the mental and physical exertions of Stephen Dedalus rummaging through his pockets for spare change to assist John Corley, all the while aware that the latter's intimations of hunger are more the consequence of habitual drunkenness than of temporary unemployment:

Though this sort of thing went on every other night or very near it still Stephen's feelings got the better of him in a sense though he knew that Corley's brandnew rigmarole, on a par with the others, was hardly deserving of much credence. However, haud ignatus malorum miseris succurrere disco, etcetera, as the Latin poet remarks, especially as luck would have it he got paid his screw after every middle of the month on the sixteenth which was the date of the month as a matter of fact though a good bit of the wherewithal was demolished. But the cream of the joke





was nothing would get it out of Corley's head that he was living in affluence and hadn't a thing to do but hand out the needfull--whereas. He put his hand in a pocket anyhow, not with the idea of finding any food there, but thinking he might lend him anything up to a bob or so in lieu so that he might endeavour at all events and get sufficient to eat. But the result was in the negative for, to his chagrin, he found his cash missing. A few broken biscuits were all the result of his investigation. He tried his hardest to recollect for the moment whether he had lost, as well he might have, or left, because in that contingency it was not a pleasant lookout, very much the reverse, in fact. He was altogether too fagged out to institute a thorough search though he tried to recollect about biscuits he dimly remembered. Who now exactly gave them, or where was, or did he buy? However, in another pocket he came across what he surmised in the dark were pennies, erroneously, however, as it turned out (pp. 617-618).

The combination of inebriation and motion has its equivalent in Manhattan Transfer. In Bud Korpenning's and Laplander Maddy's bar-hopping tour of the downtown dock area, however, the focus is on the kind of episode responsible for Stephen's condition: "Arm in arm they careened up Pearl Street under the drenching rain. Bars yawned bright to them at the corners of rainseething streets. Yellow light of mirrors and brass rails and gilt frames round pictures of pink naked women was looped and slopped into whiskeyglasses guzzled fiery with tipped back head, oozed bright through the blood, popped bubbly out of ears and eyes, dripped spluttering off fingertips. The raindark houses heaved on either side, streetlamps swayed like lanterns carried in a parade, until Bud was in a back room full of nudging faces with a woman on his knees" (p. 94). From the interior shifts achieved by increasingly subjective language and syntax and from the rapid juxtaposition of sense impressions emerges a linguistic approximation of alcohol-produced sensory distortion. By the time a more external objective vantage point has been restored and movement has ceased, the mini-narrative from



the first of these is the fact that the  
the second is the fact that the  
the third is the fact that the  
the fourth is the fact that the  
the fifth is the fact that the  
the sixth is the fact that the  
the seventh is the fact that the  
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the ninth is the fact that the  
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the twenty-sixth is the fact that the

the twenty-seventh is the fact that the

"Tracks" has created something of a direct contrast with the slow-motion "Eumaeus" passage from Ulysses. Despite its own third person narrative perspective, Manhattan Transfer's "careening," intoxicated prose brings us to the back room bordello in a manner expressive of Bud's own arrival there.

Suggestion of physical and mental movement through language is most dramatically demonstrated in Alexanderplatz toward the conclusion of Franz's voyeuristic arrangement with Reinhold in Book VII. Because of Mieze's confession that she has become enamored of her elderly patron's nephew, the episode takes a turn unanticipated by either Franz or Reinhold when a suddenly enraged Biberkopf assaults the girl. Reeling from the effects of this first offensive, he remembers Reinhold's presence under the bed: "Der Franz Biberkopf aber,--Biberkopf, Lieberkopf, Zieberkopf, keinen Namen hat der--, die Stube dreht sich, die Betten stehen da, an einem Bett hält er sich fest. Da liegt Reinhold drunter, der Kerl, der liegt da mit Stiebeln und macht een Bett dreckig. Wat hat der hier zu suchen? Der hat doch seine Stube. Den hol ick raus, den setzen wir raus, machen wir, m. w. mit m weichen w. Und schon gondelt Franz Biberkopf, Zieberkopf, Niberkopf, Widekopf hopst an das Bett, fasst den durch die Decke an den Kopf, der bewegt sich, die Decke geht hoch, Reinhold sitzt auf" (p. 368). In this combination of reported action and interior monologue, skeletal sentences stripped of any extraneous material, dissociative and associative effects of word and sound plays, and the rapid accumulation of monosyllabic, physically active verbs communicate intense movement and emotion. They reflect as well the force and automatonlike mindlessness involved in

THE FIRST PART OF THE HISTORY OF THE  
LIFE OF THE LATE KING CHARLES THE FIRST  
BY JOHN BURNET  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
THE SECOND PART  
BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
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LONDON: Printed by J. Sturges, at the Angel in St. Dunstons Church, 1704.

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Franz's actions.

Such minor illustrations of formal expressiveness have innumerable and more elaborate counterparts in novels where an episode's constantly changing narrative optic suggests the movement and flow of Dublin's population ("Wandering Rocks"), and where broad scale shifts from character to character and episode to episode or else the abrupt transitions involving characters, episodes, and interpolated metropolitan artifacts convey the pace and diversity of New York and Berlin. Moreover, in works that rely very little upon traditional methods of descriptive narration, where emphasis falls instead upon direct and indirect representation in richly connected texts, formal expressiveness and immediacy manifest themselves in the present tense aspect created by the encounter with events and experiences at the times of their occurrence.<sup>50</sup> The effect is most acutely felt in the on-the-spot recordings of Bloom's interior monologues and in the "Circe" episode's simultaneous enactment of what is transpiring on the realistic and hallucinatory levels. In Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz present tense features are extended into the third person narrative. Used somewhat sparingly by Dos Passos, as in Bud Korpenning's nervous barbershop skimming of the newspaper (p. 17) or in Gus McNeil's pre-accident milk delivery activities (p. 45), the present tense actually dominates much of Alexanderplatz.

Heightened formal expressiveness is further enhanced by the multiplicity of narrative means in novels using diverse elements of composition as both subject matter and vehicles for advancing the narrative. In Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer this characteristic





frequently reveals itself in a unit as small as a paragraph densely packed with examples of epic preterite, narrated and interior monologue, interpolated prison regulations, children's rhymes, and song fragments. The paragraph thereby reproduces the novel's entire text in miniature. Ulysses is not without similar, if less diversified, encapsulations, such as some of the paragraphs contained in the "Hades" section's carriage ride. On the whole, however, Ulysses best reveals its composite nature in the progression of its eighteen sections rather than its separate sentences.

In the case of all three novels the composite effect and the procedures involved in its production have been described in similar terms. Readers of the separate works have sometimes expanded upon the customary application of "montage" as a specific technique and used it to describe the manner in which the heterogeneously composed novels function. Despite the different interpretations respective borrowers have given a term borrowed from painting and film,<sup>51</sup> its usage is quite significant. Recourse to the other arts for purposes of dealing with the specific manifestations of formal expressiveness is directly related to a common feature in the three works, namely, their metamorphosis of the novel as an all-inclusive artistic amalgam. Between the covers of Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz, the novel becomes generically, traditionally, and artistically protean. Furthermore, it does so in a way that forges close new links with popular forms of art and cultural expression. While their journey affiliations ground all three works in an ancient tradition, their respective roots have an unmistakable freshness and youth about them. Indeed, they are as

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recent as the widely accessible mass culture that is contemporary with the novels.

As an elaborate analogy for human existence, Ulysses relies on a narrative base whose component elements are mundane enough to align it with the pulp fiction that the novel occasionally travesties. Points of juncture are clearly visible between the Dublin variation on cuckolding and adultery and the book purchased for Molly during Bloom's afternoon, those Sweets of Sin (p. 236) whose refrains of illicit passion are taken up in Bloom's thoughts throughout the remainder of the day. Just as easily, however, Ulysses' resemblance to Molly's preferred reading material can be identified in the expression and nature of its protagonists' sentimental-erotic fantasies marked by seductions of young poets and obsessions with female undergarments.<sup>52</sup> Outside their obvious establishment of the southern and eastern reverberations indispensable to Joyce's total schema, the Mediterranean-Near Eastern evocations in Molly's Gibraltar reminiscences (p. 775) and in Bloom's abbreviated renditions of them (p. 371) also strengthen the affinities with pulp. In particular, Bloom's frequent contemplation of Molly's Spanish-Turkish-Arabic aspect that emphasizes her darkness and opulence and imagines her in yashmak and harem costume (pp. 275, 281, 439) suggests an equation of "exoticism" and sensuality not unlike the brand responsible for illicit lovers named "Raoul" (p. 236).

This kind of apparent anchorage in the conventions of popular culture is even more pronounced in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. With its utilization of stock themes like the flight to New York and attendant quest for success as well as its dependence upon stereotypical





characters and situations, Manhattan Transfer's moorings are in that very mass entertainment to which Dos Passos' theatre criticism called attention. Their approximate German equivalents come easily to mind in Alexanderplatz. There the underworld and erotic escapades and the Kneipe scenes complete with brazen shimmies and ten-minute clinches (p. 275) assume the features of the kitsch literature, the cabaret life, and the popular songs Döblin took note of in his non-fiction Berlin commentary. Absorption of popular culture and mass phenomena does not end at the ground level in Alexanderplatz, however. Nor does it cease with the appropriation of vaudeville and burlesque in Manhattan Transfer. Both novels are so infused with the diverse phenomena forming that culture's broad spectrum that they become, in a sense, digests of that culture itself. Moreover, they do not simply record its multiple manifestations; they fully integrate them within the novel's formal structure.

Examples are legion, although only a few need suffice as illustrations. Somewhat lower-keyed than its prototypes, the Nelly McNiel-George Baldwin affair (MT, pp. 51-53), with its aura of instantaneous attraction, suggests a fusion of confessional romance, popular melodrama, and pulp novel. Despite its clinical presentation, the interpolated vignette of the young music student with her elderly lover and intimations of sadism in Alexanderplatz (pp. 58-59) has many of the trappings of an episode typical of the pornographic magazines examined and peddled by Franz (p. 75). Elsewhere inserted metropolitan portraits recall the substance and manner of cartoons and satirical sketches, gossip columns, and "human interest" news reports. Crap-





shooting street urchins (pp. 25-26) and a flashily dressed "John" in search of a prostitute (p. 61) appear in Manhattan Transfer, for example; Alexanderplatz records the arrival of an international celebrity (p. 233) and the automobile collision case of alcoholic Chauffeur Papke and film distributor Trotzke (pp. 336-337). Aspects of sensational tabloids, scandal sheets, and the more lurid standard news accounts are reproduced in the firebug episodes of Manhattan Transfer witnessed by Ed Thatcher (pp. 13-14) and Emile (pp. 114-115), in the rape-murder story related at Anna Cohen's garment factory (p. 347), and in the tale of the kitchen table abortionist told by Alice Sheffield (p. 378). Alexanderplatz has its numerous equivalents. For all of those relayed through the characters themselves, such as the elderly construction workers' observations regarding a Berliner Zeitung report of suicide and infanticide (pp. 275-276) or the café chatter about the American bride of remote Black ancestry who sued her European husband for damages (p. 190), there are others offered more directly. The morals case against a married homosexual and his young male prostitute lover (pp. 77-78) and the diary entries of the twenty-six-year-old female depressive (pp. 338-339), for example, furnish what confronts Berliners in daily fact and in print.

More than mere naturalistic coloration, such affinities with paraliterature and journalism confer a non-literary character upon the novels. That character itself is heightened by the presence of non-novelistic features affiliated with the other arts. Books whose documentation of modern experience includes references to contemporary stage performances seem to assume some of their distinctive traits.



With puzzlement, for example, Franz notes the announcement of a Piscator production (p. 274) in a novel one early reader designated "eine Piscatoraufführung als Roman."<sup>53</sup> Certainly, with its captionlike chapter headings and the distancing provided by its chatty narrator, Alexanderplatz offers a novelistic counterpart to the Piscator stage of placards and mixed media effects. By 1924, when limited to Fahnen's slide projections and its emphatic and explanatory headline captions on placards,<sup>54</sup> that kind of theatre had already found an admirer in Döblin. These points of convergence with theatre of socio-political and popular designs have an obvious analogue in Manhattan Transfer. Dos Passos' novel strongly suggests, even in its smallest units, the kind of fusion theatre he critically promoted and attempted in his own Garbage Man. The most notable example is furnished by Jimmy Herf's Nighttown-like fantasy of the judicial, civic, and business facets of New York reality (p. 354). In its rapid scenic alterations, personification of inanimate objects, and animation of figures of speech rely upon the spectacle and burlesque effects that ranked so high among Dos Passos' theatrical priorities.

Partly allied with these theatrelike attributes, a pronounced visual emphasis dominates both novels. The cartoon and caricaturistic quality already noted apropos of Manhattan Transfer has its counterparts in Alexanderplatz. Through either the optic of the narrator or of Franz himself, the often anonymous population of Alexanderplatz is frequently presented in terms of its physical contours and summed up as hair or clothing or as distinctive physical traits. More often than not we encounter Berliners like "Der Blasse" and "Der Grauhaarige,"





someone inquiring after "einen . . . mit schwarzem Mantel, brauner Kragen, Pelzkragen" (p. 113), and "ein Glatzkopf" (p. 77) seeking a homosexual liaison in the Tiergarten. When Franz is agitated, two men in his path are not only Expressionistically conceived but reminiscent of the distortion and significant detail of a Grosz line drawing: "Einer mit einer Ledermütze, schlaffes weisses Gesicht, kratzte mit dem kleinen Finger ein Furunkelchen an seinem Kinn, dabei hing seine Unterlippe. Einer mit einem grossen Rücken und hängendem Hosenboden stand schräg neben ihm . . ." (p. 140). The sketch is not unlike Dos Passos' own Grosz-like reduction of two wealthy and obnoxious drunks to "The moon-face and the bottlenose . . . coming back from the lavatory reeling arm in arm among the palms in the hall" (p. 32).<sup>55</sup>

The novels' graphic quality is enhanced by other evidence of pictorial subjectivism. In Dos Passos' case an intense colorism is radically different, as George Knox observes (p. 248), from the impressionistic light and color effects of his earliest writing. Already obvious in the barhopping sequence cited earlier, it is perhaps most effectively realized in the prose poem of "Steamroller." (p. 112). There the qualities of Expressionistic painting are suggested by the interplay of somber dark (black, blue) and garish brighter hues (red, yellow, green) and by the contrast between the formers' bulk and massive pressure and the latters' slow, liquid qualities. Less intensely visual and color dependent than the prose of amateur illustrator, painter and set designer Dos Passos,<sup>56</sup> Döblin's language is none the less painterly in its efforts at subjective distortion. Presentation of emotion as image, particularly in Franz's recurrent hallucination of



sliding roofs, offers a typical example of Expressionism's exteriorization of inner states. It also furnishes a word portrait equivalent of any number of Expressionist canvases.

Works that realize their actions, emotions, and events pictorially do not restrict their visual suggestiveness to the effects of painting. Not the least striking feature of the visual emphasis so intimately bound up with formal expressiveness in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz is their "cinematic" aspect. Novels in which characters are drawn to Elternlos, Schicksal eines Waisenkindes in 6 Akten (BA, p. 31) and in which prose poem inserts note "flyspecked stereopticons" offering antique evidence of the dream machine in A Hot Time, The Bachelor's Surprise, and The Stolen Garter (MT, p. 291) undeniably absorb the content of contemporary film. Franz's fateful automobile ride in Alexanderplatz, for example, is briefly launched as a getaway-and-chase reminiscent of the immensely popular serial thrillers commented on in Döblin's theatre and film reviews. In Manhattan Transfer Annette Cardinale excitedly remarks on the fracas surrounding the Sheepshead Bay hijacking of bottled liquor, "Gee, it was like in the movies" (p. 321); Anna Cohen's romantic fantasies are partially conceived in silent screen star images where Elmer Duskin merges with Valentino and Fairbanks, Sr. (p. 398). Such latter attestations to film's impact as a social institution and to film culture itself are seconded in Alexanderplatz where, for example, a Chaplinesque clown appears in the mammoth Neue Welt beer hall frequented by pleasure-seeking Berliners after their working day (p. 82). But the phenomenon is even more pervasively felt in Manhattan Transfer





and Alexanderplatz. The two novels actually suggest something of film form.

In light of the German and American authors' respective assessments of film's public accessibility and immediacy as well as its impact upon modes of perception and taste, the presence of film-like qualities in their writing is not at all startling. Nor is it unique, since the new medium exerted a powerful attraction for many writers of the period. But the works of Dos Passos and Döblin differ markedly from some of the "cinematic" novels contemporary with them, especially that variety of subjective fiction falling under the stream-of-consciousness category. Lacking that mode's central concern with perception and with vision as a subject in itself, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz confront the cinematic experience as an undeniable fact of modern life strongly influencing readers' habits and attitudes toward the written text and as a direct and unique expression of the age. Both encounters derive from the understanding that the novel's reconciliation with a broad audience and its present existence necessarily required literary accommodations to film's artistic and social penetration.

Despite the presence of a legitimate cinematic connection for both novels, even the briefest of treatments of the interartistic relationship must proceed with a certain degree of caution. What may strike the reader of either novel as distinctively "cinematic" has parallels in the period's literary and plastic arts, particularly in painting and in poetry (for example, Apollinaire, Cendrars, Dada, Cubism) and is sometimes "cinematic" only insofar as transmitted through





film-influenced intermediaries. It may also originate in a confluence of artistic streams instead of one particular source. Indeed, the novel itself is not traditionally lacking in features some observers have attributed to film. Slow and accelerated motion have centuries-old antecedents in the novel, as Tristram Shandy and Jacques le fataliste easily prove; effects akin to close-ups, long shots, and panning can be found in Madame Bovary, a work favored by both Dos Passos and Joyce. In the cases of Dos Passos and Döblin, it is unwise to assign to either writer a degree of cineliteracy that does not correspond to the actual facts. Like Joyce during the composition of Ulysses, the Dos Passos of Manhattan Transfer was more immersed in theatre than in film. His "literary" interest in cinematic technique largely postdates the New York novel. For all his ambivalent reactions to the state of German film, Döblin was most definitely intrigued by and involved with cinema. In his own scenarios and critical writing he had actually attempted to deal with some of the medium's unique properties and its manner of shaping and transforming reality. At the same time, his film commentary betrays a certain naïveté about the medium's non-narrative potential.<sup>57</sup>

Allowing for such caveats, it must still be conceded that novels embracing the nature and details of modern experience do so in a remarkably cinematic way. Within the space of a single paragraph, frequent shifts in perspective from exterior to interior character views and from significant details in milieu to broader expanses create a mobile, cameralike narrative optic. Abrupt transitions suggestive of filmlike breaks in continuity and jumps in time can be found throughout Manhattan Transfer as we leave characters in one condition and re-en-



counter them in slightly altered circumstances after variable time lapses. The feature marks even the smallest of narrative segments where minutes, rather than hours, months, or years, are involved. When Nevada Jones hastily dispatches Tony Hunter, for example, after learning that George Baldwin is on his way up to her apartment, a compressed scene that relies heavily on sound and dialogue is nevertheless composed like silent film. It includes a very striking cut from Nevada moving about the room to Nevada facing Baldwin and McNiel:

The phone cut into the room suddenly with a glittering sawtooth ring. "Hello. . . . Yes this is Miss Jones. . . . Why of course George I'm waiting for you. . ." She put up the receiver. "Great snakes, Tony beat it. I'll call you later. Dont go down in the elevator you'll meet him coming up." Tony Hunter melted out the door. Nevada put Baby . . . Babee Deevine on the phonograph and strode nervously about the room, straightening chairs, patting her tight short curls into place.

"Oh George I thought you werent comin. . . . How do you do Mr. McNiel? I dunno why I'm all jumpy today. I thought you were never comin. Let's get some lunch up. I'm that hungry."

George Baldwin put his derby hat and stick on a table in the corner. "What'll you have Gus?" he said. "Sure I always take a lamb chop an a baked potato." (pp. 311-312).

In Alexanderplatz small-scale counterparts for cinematic cutting techniques find a most dramatic illustration, as Erich Hülse suggests (pp. 66-67), in the prelude to the confrontation between Franz and Reinhold following the loss of Biberkopf's arm. Built up from alternating views of Franz's progression through the streets and those of Reinhold sitting in his room reading the newspaper, the episode is provided an appropriately suspenseful tempo as the shifts from Franz to Reinhold are increasingly shortened to snatches of the marcher's inner monologue set against the reader's responses to the printed page (pp. 320-321). Döblin has achieved, in fact, a counterpart for





the crosscutting produced by interweaving shots of two actions that subsequently merge, in this case, most cinematically as the concluding "Es klopft, herein" (p. 321).

Additional film analogues can be noted in synoptic flashbacks that provide the past with a present tense immediacy and vividness. What transpired between the time Franz was pushed out of the Pums' gang getaway car and brought to his present hospital location, for example, is encapsulated in juxtapositions of his reactions during his rescue and the activities of his rescuers seeking to locate Herbert Wischow. The control over time and space is not simply Franz's but the plastic variety characteristic of film: "Sie sollen mich nicht erwischen. Es ist sicher, Herbert wohnt noch da und ist jetzt zu Haus. Die Leute rennen durch das Lokal in der Elsasserstrasse, sie fragen nach einem Herbert Wischow. Da steht schon ein schlanker junger Mann auf neben einer schönen schwarzen Frau, was ist los, was, draussen im Auto, rennt mit ihnen zum Auto raus, das Mädchen hinterher, das halbe Lokal mit. Franz weiss, wer jetzt kommt. Er befiehlt der Zeit" (p. 244).

Manhattan Transfer depends upon similar effects. A young Jimmy Herf looking down the airshaft in the hotel suite where his mother has recently suffered a stroke is reminded of his obligatory return to boarding school. Suddenly, the narrative shifts into the present tense, complete with a dialoguized version of a school fight that has indelibly impressed itself upon Herf's memory (pp. 96-97).

Such as they appear within both novels, cityscapes often emerge from a cameralike embrace of multiple details and broader vistas.

Manhattan Transfer contains several literary parallels for the



adjustments in distance and angle used to capture New York in Strand's and Sheeler's Manhatta. Bud Korpenning's Brooklyn Bridge walk suggests a series of shots running from close-up through long, including the high and low-angle variety as well:

Picking his teeth he walked through the grimydark entrance to Brooklyn Bridge. A man in a derby hat was smoking a cigar in the middle of the broad tunnel. Bud brushed past him walking with a tough swagger. I dont care about him; let him follow me. The arching footwalk was empty except for a single policeman who stood yawning, looking up at the sky. It was like walking among thestars. Below in either direction streets tapered into dotted lines of lights between square black-windowed buildings. The river lights glimmered underneath like the Milky Way above. Silently smoothly the bunch of lights of a tug slipped through the moist darkness. A car whirred across the bridge making the girders rattle and the spiderwork of cables thrum like a shaken banjo (p. 124).

Similar results are produced by Ellen Thatcher's bus ride south on Fifth Avenue with its panning of "Sunshades, summer dresses, straw hats . . . bright in the sun that glinted in squares on the upper windows of houses, lay in bright slivers on the hard paint of limousines and taxicabs" (p. 137), hotel and restaurant façades, and store windows. Elsewhere a glance out of her Park Avenue window by Cecily Baldwin reads like a succession of assorted long shorts (p. 185).

Döblin's novel roams over the details of its milieu like Ruttmann's Symphonie einer Grossstadt. Indeed, the introductory section of Book V (pp. 179-183) scans the Alex, taking in all of its moving detail and distinctive features while noting its changes during the course of the day. In this way it approximates a verbal transcription of the film's central sequences. Occurring earlier in the novel, another tour, that of the hog slaughterhouse, places the reader directly in the role of the camera-as-ambulatory spectator. The effect is





especially pronounced in that portion of the text beginning with the "Stoss gegen die Tür" (p. 147) which precipitates entry into the steamy interior past the animals in various stages of butchering. It terminates with the pause at the sight of row upon row of hogs laid out on planks (p. 149).

Specific cinematic parallels like these hardly exhaust the novels' filmlike procedures. As readers have frequently and casually remarked, broader analogues do distinguish the spatial and temporal discontinuity and the synchronism of a narrative made up of heterogeneous materials. Necessarily included here is the exploitation of diverse textual components which generate particularly striking intellectual relationships and create a kaleidoscope of rapidly alternating angles of vision.<sup>58</sup> It must be acknowledged, however, that the cinematic nature of either novel has not yet received the kind of exploration it merits, even though film is customarily invoked in association with Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. A comparative treatment of both novels' cinematic aspects that recognizes the inherent differences between film and literature would contribute invaluable to the works' explication and to the study of interartistic relationships. Far beyond the scope and the ambitions of the present study, its potential can only be fleetingly acknowledged here with respect to novels distinguished by filmlike composition.

Works offering something akin to film production itself through the cutting, assembling, arranging, and editing of their material components are also allied with other visual phenomena which rely on similar operations. The writing of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz





involved the actual inclusion of newspaper clippings in their manuscripts. In Döblin's case inclusions even amounted to the clippings' adhesion to the pages of his draft.<sup>59</sup> Much like the features of experimental art and poetry of the period--whether epitomized by individual exponents like Apollinaire or by entire groups like the Cubists and Dadaists--which exploited the physical facts of contemporary reality, the incorporation of reality's data points up the degree to which formal expressiveness harmonizes with reconciliatory aims. Filtered through the consciousness of a character, set off from other portions of the text, or else interwoven with them, headlines, news reports, advertisements, song fragments, and graphic and typographic variations combine with other non-novelistic traits in an interartistic synthesis. The finished product is a visual object in itself: the novel becomes a living artifact of modern experience with dimensions broad enough to encompass the major manifestations of popular culture.

Needless to say, visual emphasis and living artifact dimensions are most Ulyssean features. In a novel where typography, section format, and interpolated fragments of musical scores have specific expressive purposes, Joyce created his own unique interartistic synthesis. But he did so while working from a rather different vantage point from Dos Passos and Döblin. The accounts of such intimates as Budgen and Maria Jolas explain that Joyce was far less interested in the visual arts of the period than some of his readers would believe. While residing in Zurich at the time it served as a center of artistic ferment and a magnet for famous theatre companies, Joyce showed non-literary enthusiasms which were largely directed toward the stage. Consistent



with his longstanding dramatic interests and his hopeful designs for a production of his own Exiles, Joyce patronized the theatre frequently, saw all the productions of Strindberg (whom he held to be inferior to Ibsen), and displayed an interest in Wedekind's work. But as far as the visual arts were concerned, there is no evidence to suggest any similar inclinations. Budgen refers to Joyce's own Zurich disclaimers of any knowledge of the plastic or pictorial arts and mentions his tendency to "read literature" into both rather than to grasp their "plastic expressiveness." More recently, Joyce's attention to the narrative element in painting has been reiterated by Maria Jolas. She also explains that in painting itself Joyce had "No real interest." Even when he lived in Paris while it was a mecca for important painters and composers, he had no contact with them and displayed little curiosity about their work. Neither his habits nor his domicile betrayed evidence of interest in the artistic experimentation going on outside his circle of intimates. According to Jolas, "He did not enjoy listening to Stravinsky, nor did he go to see the paintings of Picasso. He was the greatest literary genius of his time, but he was closed to the other forms of art of that epoch."<sup>60</sup>

To some extent this kind of information "demythologizes" a Joyce who has sometimes assumed Goethean proportions. It does not, however, detract from Ulysses' obvious resemblance to a compendium of the artistic tendencies of its time. Certainly, as Robert Adams submits (p. 247), Joyce's exploitation of the materials drawn from real life reminds us of the collage, trompe-l'oeil, and objet trouvé popular in the plastic arts of the period. Yet their Sterne-like incorporation





derives from a form-subject fusion largely founded on a preoccupation with aesthetic dynamics rather than on an approximation of contemporary artistic experience. Furthermore, as is characteristic of the metropolis with which they are affiliated, the data that simultaneously advance the narrative are somewhat different from the variety to be found in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz.

Instructive in this context is the newspaper format that dominates the "Aeolus" episode so heavily reliant upon references to the Irish press and to actual journalists. Although its "headlines" are actually closer to captions under illustrations and photographs, a feature entirely in keeping with the section's emphasis on gesture and visual detail,<sup>61</sup> the Irish Freeman chapter is decidedly newspaper-like. In many ways it resembles the short-lived Scissors and Paste (December 1914-January 1915) which is directly mentioned in the opening pages apropos of Red Murray's layout work (p. 117). Under its editor, the founder of Sinn Fein and The United Irishman (1899-1906), the same Arthur Griffith whose name crops up several times in Ulysses, the publication employed scissors and paste procedures to escape censorship by forming its pages entirely from the juxtaposition and combination of headlines from British, American, and European newspapers. Seeking to expose the follies and hypocracies of Church and State, Griffith provided direct and uneditorialized evidence of institutional excesses. Through its very method and such allusions to Griffith's writing as the one implied in Miles Crawford's "Hungarian it was one day" (p. 133), a likely reference to the 1904 United Irishman articles comparing Hungarian and Irish political realities, the chapter provides, among



other things, a tribute to an admired compatriot with whom Joyce doubtless identified.<sup>62</sup>

Beyond its service as a probable testimonial, this utilization of reality forms but one component of a section in which the functioning of the daily press offers an updated equivalent for Homer's palace of winds and the ancient art of rhetoric. A section in which linguistic idiosyncracies are really examples of numerous rhetorical forms<sup>63</sup> illustrates Ulysses' underlying premise. Despite apparent changes and comic discrepancies, there really is, as Bloom platitudinizes, "Nothing new under the sun" (p. 377). In contrast, American and German attempts to explore and draw upon material reality proceed from the opposite assumption.

Even so, Ulysses clearly exploits its base as a point of departure for a broad interartistic synthesis. Moreover, that synthesis does not exclusively depend upon the traditional arts to which all of the novel's sections, save Molly's monologue, have been assigned.<sup>64</sup> The novel's integration of a number of the popular and mass forms of cultural expression is apparent in its alignment with pulp fiction, be it the aforementioned Sweets of Sin variety or the kitsch that dominates the Gerty MacDowell episode. In addition to the printed kind, non-literary diversions also make their presence felt. Complete with Panama hat and cane (Stephen's ashplant), Buck Mulligan's morning delivery of "The Ballad of Joking Jesus" (pp. 18-19) includes vaudeville, for example, as one of a shape-shifter's many guises. The novel as a whole assumes the nature of a series of mixed speciality acts in Nighttown. This general feature is reinforced by such specific details





as the inclusion of banjo-picking, cakewalking minstrels in blackface (pp. 443-444), by Bloom's own bit part as a singing, joking stage Irishman (p. 491), and by the echoes of straight man versus comic patter audible in such two-liners as Bloom's "Mixed races and mixed marriage" and Lenehan's "What about mixed bathing?" (p. 490) or in the Philip Drunk and Philip Sober paraphrase (p. 521) of the Holy Ghost joke uttered earlier in the day.

Toward the other crowd-pleaser that eventually superseded vaudeville, Ulysses reveals a somewhat different relationship. Unlike Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz, Ulysses exhibits no specific evidence of the impact of film, which in 1904 was already quite influential outside Ireland through the nickelodeons designated by Döblin as "Das Theater der kleinen Leute." Obviously, 1904 Dublin could hardly corroborate film's far-reaching impact, since the city was without a cinema until Joyce himself attempted to establish one there in 1909. Undertaken for commercial gain, the Volta Cinematograph actually originated with Joyce's sister Eva. Although her 1909 stay in Trieste found her homesick for Dublin, she had definitely enjoyed a Triestine amenity entirely missing from her native city: the cinema. Joyce was struck by Eva's comment that a city larger than Trieste had not even one such theatre. For the purpose of establishing one in Dublin, he enlisted the backing of four Triestine businessmen who had experienced success with two cinemas in Trieste and a third in Bucharest. Heavily Italian in its programming, administered by one of the four Triestines with some technical expertise as a mechanic, and largely neglected by Joyce after the December 1909 opening, the Volta did not





survive beyond the spring. Thus Dubliners were left to the kind of film exposure furnished exclusively by the occasional screenings that took place in hired halls.<sup>65</sup>

On the basis of this brief monetary attraction to the film phenomenon, it is difficult to ascertain the extent and nature of Joyce's real film interests insofar as they may have had an effect upon Ulysses. By the 1930s, it is true, Joyce had been introduced to Eisenstein in Paris and, even while he officially rejected some of them, still contemplated proposals for adapting Ulysses for the screen.<sup>66</sup> These facts, however, do not have much bearing on the composition of the novel itself.

When Ulysses appears to corroborate film's impact, it is largely through the techniques used for characterization and for suggestion of the cityscape. A counterpart to Jimmy Herf's prep school fight flashback--doubtless culled from Dos Passos' own unhappy boarding school experiences--occurs in Stephen's sudden morning recollection of Clive Kempthorpe's ragging and threatened "castration" in the university's student quarters, for example (p. 7). It is a highly visual, present tense scene built up from physical activity and unmediated dialogue. As he wanders through Dublin, Bloom's own silent musings, marked by abrupt shifts in distance and angles of vision, are cameralike transcriptions of the details of memory and milieu. So, indeed, is the more elaborate version that constitutes Molly's conclusion to the novel. As is by now a cliché of Ulysses commentary, "Wandering Rocks" is reminiscent of cinematic cutting and furnishes a literary analogue for the spatial and temporal coexistence so effectively realized on



celluloid.

In certain instances Joyce foreshadows a number of achievements as yet unknown to film. The animal-human analogies that form Eisenstein's "collision of ideas" in Strike (1925), namely, the famous ox slaughter intercuts among the shots of massacred workers, are "preceded" by Bloom's more playful interspecies associations: "A squad of constables debouched from College street, marching in Indian file. Goose step. Foodheated faces, sweating helmets, patting their truncheons. After their feed with a good load of fat soup under their belts. Policeman's lot is oft a happy one. They split up into groups and scattered, saluting towards their beats. Let out to graze. Best moment to attack one in pudding time. A punch in his dinner. A squad of others, marching irregularly, rounded Trinity railings, making for the station. Bound for their troughs. Prepare to receive cavalry. Prepare to receive soup" (p. 162).

Precisely this kind of antecedence of the literary over the cinematic indicates the difficulties in identifying legitimate film correspondences rather than general interartistic analogues and in claiming "cineliteracy" instead of literacy itself. Literature, or so Joyce claimed in his acknowledged indebtedness to Dujardin, suggested the potential of interior monologue. Moreover, it is probably accurate to substitute "theatre" for "film" in many cases where general cinematic parallels occur. Bloom's perception of the different police squadrons let out to pasture and heading for their feed is a miniature of the hallucinatory transformations of "Circe." Those are largely theatrical in nature. From the foregoing it is apparent that the confluence of





interartistic currents that is so marked in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz is far more intricate in Joyce's work where the currents themselves are not necessarily twentieth-century ones.

The interartistic synthesis in Ulysses differs from its counterparts in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz in other significant ways. Major emphasis in both the American and German novels falls upon art and culture in their most popular and mass manifestations. In a manner of speaking, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz comprehend all art within these forms. Conversely, despite its own breakdown of traditional artistic hierarchies, Ulysses embraces the popular varieties within a spectrum of high and low forms. Something of this is already apparent in the aforementioned use of the newspaper as a latter-day embodiment of the ancient art of rhetoric. Ulysses' approach to a fusion of the arts is also related to its musical character, which can probably be considered the work's dominant aspect. Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz incorporate song in its manifestations as the popular lyrics of the day and as the traditional ballads and jingles within the public domain. As is repeatedly noted, the American and German novels also employ their lyrical components in a musical way and show structural affinities with musical modes, especially through certain leitmotiflike tendencies. In neither novel, however, do the higher forms outweigh the lower ones. More important, in neither novel does music assume the same pre-eminence accorded it in Ulysses. There it is almost synonymous with art itself. Moreover, the much discussed musical structure of Ulysses, either in its separate sections or in its entirety, contributes to the kind of artistic liberation from materiality



deliberately sought by Joyce. He was to most successfully realize it, of course, in Finnegans Wake, that work which most closely approximates music as autonomous art.

Since the present discussion is designed to avoid duplicating the limited technical similarities and contrasts customarily mentioned in connection with the three novels, our attention is more fruitfully directed to non-musical illustrations of the approaches to inter-artistic synthesis in Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz. Differences among the novels are perhaps most readily apprehended in the manner in which they draw upon literary tradition and in the influence of that tradition upon the work's multiform character. As projected expressions and interpretations of new realities, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz are particular explorations of the novel's liberation from the book, specifically that "literary" character frequently and sharply criticized by both authors. Ulysses presents itself as a similar emancipation. It does so not simply through its radical departure from the conventions of the English-language novel but through its proliferation of non-literary features, including a heightened emphasis upon the sounds of English in all its forms. As everywhere else in Ulysses, however, where contrarities are the rule, freedom and confinement co-exist. They do so to the extent that Ulysses is far more book-bound than either Manhattan Transfer or Alexanderplatz.

Outside its most conspicuous turns from fairly conventional novelistic narrative in the early sections to subsequent journalism (Newspaper Office), pulp novelette (Gerty MacDowell), banter and mock heroic (Barney Kiernan's pub), catechism (Eccles Street), drama (end





of the National Library episode, all of Bella Cohen's whorehouse), and monologue (Molly's conclusion, Stephen's and Bloom's earlier variants), Ulysses suggests the procedures of other forms, notably the Symbolist poem and the mock epic. Furthermore, in a work where, as Fritz Senn proposes, language is the real protagonist, the novel becomes a massively elaborated word play, a pun with myriad reverberations. In short, Ulysses expands the novel to what another reader, David Hayman, has termed an "omnibook."<sup>67</sup>

This additionally protean facet of Ulysses' personality has a particular relationship to literary tradition. When Ulysses appropriates the features of diverse genres, it does so evoking specific literary models and antecedents. Thus "Circe" is not merely hallucinatory and theatrical but strongly reminiscent through its allusions and specific details of the "Walpurgisnacht" of Goethe's Faust, Flaubert's Tentation de Saint Antoine, Strindberg's Traumspiel, Blake's "Island in the Moon," and even Sacher-Masoch's Venus im Pelz. Similarly, specific parodies constitute the tour de force of the Lying-In Hospital where the discussed development of the embryo is mirrored in a text reflecting the English language's evolution. Excepting their concluding reversion to the vernacular, an ending Joyce described as "a frightful jumble of pidgin English, Nigger English, Cockney, with Bowery slang and broken doggerel" (L1, p. 139), the forty parodistic paragraphs corresponding to forty weeks of the overdue Purefoy baby's gestation<sup>68</sup> present a kind of historical survey of English literature. It progresses, its author explained to Budgen (L1, p. 138), from its Latinate forms, that is, a "Sallustean-Tacitean prelude," through late nineteenth-





century Newman and Pater.

In the entire novel this literary character is reinforced by the myriad references and allusions embedded in the text. They may be as explicit as the Sacher-Masoch title rejected by Bloom in the bookshop (U, p. 235) or may form the substance of an entire section, as in the National Library episode's embrace of literature from antiquity through its rather recent European developments. They may be somewhat less obvious, as in the brothel altercation between Stephen and the English soldiers (p. 589). Based, like all of Ulysses, on situations from Joyce's own experience and that of his intimates, the incident transposes Joyce's personal dispute in Zurich with Henry Carr, a minor British consular official and amateur actor, which ultimately brought Joyce into conflict with the consulate itself.<sup>69</sup> The literary consequences amount to a paraphrase of Hamlet that produces a parody of the situation which found Blake accused of treason by soldiers of George III. Finally, the pervasiveness of literary tradition may be perceived in those obscure allusions, based as much on secondary and intermediary as on primary sources, that make the reading of Ulysses so delightful and challenging an enterprise to dedicated exegetes. The result of such a rich mosaic is literary all-inclusiveness. From its underlying Homeric affiliations down through its acknowledgment of the Irish Literary Revival roughly contemporary with Joyce's writing, Ulysses traverses most of Western literature in its major and minor manifestations. Thus, as a total entity it offers an elaboration of the Lying-In Hospital's English-language survey.

Nothing close to Ulysses' literary expansiveness can be found



in either Manhattan Transfer or Alexanderplatz. In their respective ways, they furnish the novel with a multiform character that is alternately lyric, dramatic, proverbial, and conversational. Protean shifts are found less from section to section, as in the manner of Ulysses, and more within the sections themselves. Each one becomes a kind of generic amalgam. Unlike Ulysses, where such metamorphoses tend to have specific literary sources, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz possess a formal flexibility which does not derive from the duplication of particular pre-existing patterns. Such flexibility in the American and German novels is largely the result of a deliberate inclination, to paraphrase Döblin, to allow the form to dance lyrically if this was required by the material. The tendency also determines the novels' distinctive approaches to literary tradition.

Of the two works, Alexanderplatz more closely resembles Ulysses because of its obvious exploration of the heritage of the past. However, that heritage is definitely more popular and even more oral than it is literary. Furthermore, its traces are so generalized as to be multiply suggestive. In a sense, the updated counterpart for the age-old tale of the German hero-simpleton can be viewed as a response to its particular refinement under German Bürgertum's domination of literature and to that class's genre par excellence, the Bildungsroman. When it draws upon tradition, Alexanderplatz explores the part of the German heritage that predates the establishment of Bürgertum's hegemony. The lower-class associations of the depicted life in Alexanderplatz, the text's formal division into books and chapters, and the didactic and summarizing chapter headings recall the earliest German novels





that were heavily picaresque in nature. These features are especially reminiscent of Grimmelshausen's Simplizissimus. Thus, what is noticeably contemporary and epic theatrelike is strikingly evocative of such twentieth-century experimentation's early sources. But in Alexanderplatz origins extend beyond the printed page to folk roots. With its omniscient, not always reliable narrator as a kind of carnival pitchman-barker frequently prone to "Eulenspiegelei,"<sup>70</sup> the archaizing formal frame resembles the seventeenth and eighteenth-century tradition of Bänkelsang. Originally derived from fifteenth and sixteenth-century accounts of criminal acts sung by itinerant "reporters," Bänkelsang underwent expansion in form and content and was offered at fairs and in the streets as accompaniment for a pointer-picture demonstration by a balladeer often given to impromptu commentary.<sup>71</sup>

If it assumes the general character of popular balladry and monologue, Alexanderplatz occasionally takes on the specific properties of dramatic dialogue too. At the beginning of Book VI, for example, after Herbert, Eva, and Emil have learned the true nature of the activities responsible for Biberkopf's accident, his three friends engage in a tense café conversation that formally resembles a theatre script.<sup>72</sup> Dramatic dialogue occupies far more space in Book IV's conversation between a cabbagepatch Job and a yet unidentified, disembodied voice. Here the novel presents a vernacular adaptation of biblical subject matter not unlike similar procedures in sixteenth-century Volksdrama. The non-literary, popularizing character of Alexanderplatz is further enhanced by its exploitation of the folk heritage in proverbs, ballads, and the Grim Reaper personification of



death, even as the latter fully materializes in a largely Expressionist climax to the novel.<sup>73</sup> Incorporation and adaptation of well-known passages from the most widely known work in German tradition, the Luther Bible, contribute to the dominant aspect. So do the novel's specific literary parodies and allusions.

Largely humorous in effect, even when they underscore the inevitable twentieth-century evolution of the heroic, the literary allusions in Alexanderplatz are direct and popularized, as is evident in the references to Atrean tragedy and Homeric warriors. The same approach holds true for Döblin's recourse to German literature in the narrator's playful evocations of its celebrities. Admittedly, the German heritage offered Döblin far less scope than the English-language tradition available to Joyce. However, Döblin's restriction to the obvious and the comic has more to do with designed accessibility than with the comparative limitations of his resources. When the eminent figures of German literature are called forth, for example, it is with a consistently comic flair and a lack of reverence that places them immediately in the public domain. Thus we read apropos of Cilly's desire to get even with Reinhold, "Sie trägt schon frei nach Schiller den Dolch im Gewande" (p. 241), an observation immediately followed by the deflationary qualification that the dagger is only a kitchen knife. Elsewhere Franz's references to Schiller and Goethe occur alongside quotations of doggerel about life's meaning from the Hanoverian Dohms (pp. 94-95). Similarly, parodies of German literature are either fairly conspicuous or unmistakable. Illustrative here are the Oriental hints contained in the mention of Persians and Persian carpets toward the end





of Book VII. The section itself soon reveals the unfortunate consequences arising from the desire for an outside witness to conjugal happiness. In effect, the earlier eastern associations are keys to the subsequent re-enactment of Hebbel's Lydean tragedy Gyges und sein Ring. Indeed, as a kind of further cue to the reader, Franz himself explains to Reinhold, "Jetzt pass mal uf, wie wirs machen, det is das reine Theater" (pp. 364-365).<sup>74</sup> It must, of course, be conceded that appreciation of the discrepancy between Döblin's Lumpenproletariat and some royal counterparts, not to mention enjoyment of the relegation of Reinhold-Gyges to an under-the-covers hiding-place as he spies on Franz-Kandaules and Mieze-Rhodope, is dependent on familiarity with the Hebbel source. This is not necessary for the liberties taken with the famous finale of Kleist's Prinz Friedrich von Homburg. The juxtaposition of fragments of the play's text ("Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein!" of Act V, scene ix) with Döblinesque adaptations of Kleist's verses and stage directions is anticipated by the initial reference to their Prussian source. Lina Przyballa's victorious assault on the pornography peddler is launched, we are told, as a "Vorstoß à la Prinz von Homburg" (p. 80). Consequently, the parody is self-explanatory and also consistent with the mixture of jocular and sarcastic postures assumed by the colloquial raconteur Döblin revived as his narrator.

The popularization of tradition that seeks a liberation from the book has parallels in Manhattan Transfer. They are, however, quite limited in number. In a novel responding to the conditions of tradition-free literature, vestiges of the literary past are necessarily minimal. With far more selectivity but just as much transparency as Alexanderplatz,





Manhattan Transfer generally reduces the presence of the past to the briefest of readily understandable allusions from the most common of New World landmarks, Bunyan and the Bible. Employed for specific satirical purposes, for explicit commentary, and for the broader accentuation of historical discontinuity, such references are not without their playful aspects. When humor and lack of camouflage combine, as in the encounter with the latter-day "Jonah under his gourd" (p. 129), the Lower East side pickle vendor stationed at the corner of Riverton Street,<sup>75</sup> Manhattan Transfer achieves some of the multiple effects of Ulysses' Homeric correspondences in the most obvious manner. When literature serves less as analogy, as in the semisatiric associations of homosexual Jojo Oglethorpe with the Song of Solomon (p. 133) and in heterosexual Stan Emery's drunken attempts at Sapphic verse (p. 153), it is largely as a contribution to the portrait of contemporary tastes and vogues. Unidentified references to more recent writing do occur in rather different contexts, a feature apparent in the conversation between Herf and Emery about alternatives to contemporary New York existence. Echoes of Cendrars are audible in Jimmy's mention of "Bogota and the Orinoco" (p. 174); his American ancestor is recalled in Emery's "City of orgies walks and joys . . ." (Idem.), the opening verse of Whitman's celebration of an earlier Manhattan in "City of Orgies" from Leaves of Grass. However, these are acknowledgments of other literary democratizers noted for their efforts to translate modern experience in a widely accessible and popular manner. Consequently, even when Manhattan Transfer gives evidence of specific literary ties, they are simultaneously implements for its



liberation.

Significantly, the cited links are with singers whom Dos Passos considered myth-shapers in an age desperately needing new song. As a result, the bonds created invoke appropriate muses for a comprehensive art work and a total presentation allied with a new epic desire. That desire contrasts in its emphasis and specific interpretation with the varieties peculiar to Ulysses and Alexanderplatz. It is nevertheless an impetus we cannot overlook in conjunction with Dos Passos' attempted metamorphosis of the novel. The fact that its consequences were less than celebratory and, just as in Ulysses and Alexanderplatz, marked by ambiguity is but an additional reflection of the three works' common condition.





# Non-Epic Dimensions: The Impossibility of a Modern Homer

An age denying the possibility of a modern Homer, as Döblin contended in his Ulysses review, was not necessarily incompatible with an epic desire. To be sure, the ancient heroic individual, seemingly isolated but actually representative of a cohesive community, was a literary anachronism in a technological, industrial world. Now man's being and actions seemed disconnected, and he himself was overshadowed and apparently subjugated by new forces carrying him along in their wake. Yet neither Dos Passos nor Döblin denied this new world a potentiality for its own communal translation and fusion into coherence. Moreover, this historical futurity could be rendered comprehensible by writers cognizant of the socially and historically imposed artistic priorities of the present. In their embrace of modern experience, especially as manifested through its distinctive phenomena, and in the techniques used to transmit their characteristics, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz have multiple affinities with that Italian Futurism of more than a decade earlier. Unlike the Futurists who glorified and spiritualized the machine itself and the speed and violence they considered its indispensable concomitants, however, the authors of Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz sought a man-centered, integrative approach to modern life. Undeniably, it was also one based on a progressive orientation toward the future.

Proceeding from another set of premises, Ulysses looks backward by setting up a continuum of past and present possibilities. Joyce therefore spares himself and his reader the same kind of confrontation



associated with Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. Despite this difference, many of Ulysses' man-centered particulars can be seen to resemble those peculiar to the American and German novels. Located especially in their character-milieu relationships, these similarities point up a divergence between design and outcome. The discrepancy is initiated by the portrayal of human types who function associatively.

Presentation of human components as aggregates of responses to external stimuli finds its most complex development in Ulysses' predominant focus on inner life, primarily through Bloom, who is most directly involved with his milieu. His silent soliloquies reveal the interaction between outside stimuli and internal human response in their most obvious manifestations. Whatever crosses Bloom's path precipitates a series of inner chain reactions revealing his behavioral mechanism. Unmotivated toward external activity, Bloom engages in exertions of an almost exclusively mental nature. His response to advertising, for example, specifically the notice of Palestinean property he has carried away from Dlugacz's shop, launches assorted inner speculations, personal recollections, and mental images dealing with fertility and early happiness. As the sun overhead becomes quickly beclouded, however, these are succeeded by contrasting evocations of sterility, death, and infertility (pp. 59-61). This portrayal of mental processes is, as is apparent from Ellmann's biography (pp. 407-408), an outgrowth of Joyce's conviction that the Irish and the Jews were both "addicted to associative thinking." Closely connected with the emotional concerns that preoccupy Bloom, specifically in his connubial and paternal roles, such responses also serve an obvious





structural function as integral parts of the carefully fabricated associative texture of themes and symbols in Ulysses. But exigencies of composition contribute significantly to the emerging picture of general humanity and experience in the work. To a great extent it is one that does not substantially alter Naturalism's depiction of man as the product of external forces acting upon him.

As a sample of mankind Bloom is formed of assorted foibles and strengths. Joyce has even gone so far as to endow him with the physical imperfections of dandruff, piles, and sore feet. Naturalistic details like these complete the total physiognomy of one who by turns appears as the "bowing dark figure" in the National Library (p. 201), the "lardy face" in Barney Kiernan's pub (p. 305), the pale-faced, dark-eyed foreign type sentimentalized by Gerty MacDowell, and the suitor of Byronic appearance Molly recalls as "too beautiful for a man" (p. 743). No less exhaustive, the non-physical picture is of a Bloom who displays himself, for example, as well-meaning, generous, kind, curious, and, at the same time, ill-informed, naïve, and prone to masochism and fetishism. The contradictions that compose Bloom serve to intensify his humanity. Evident in the contrasts represented by the degradation in Bella Cohen's whorehouse and by the elevation of Molly's Howth memories, that humanity comfortably admits the coexistence of extremes.

Beyond this, Bloom's representative aspect poses a number of problems. Although Joyceans themselves are not unanimous about his full significance, some very far-reaching claims have been advanced for Bloom. Notable among these are his interpretation as the classical temper incarnate, that scientific temperament epitomized by stability,





detachment, and a wise passivity toward processes of time and growth. He has been posited as a modern bourgeois industrial Everyman innately superior to his environment. It has been said of Bloom as well that he is necessarily Ulysses as the twentieth-century would create him, a rather extravagant generalization that disregards all twentieth-century experience outside a narrowly interpreted Western bourgeois variety. Bloom's human frailties suggesting the discrepancies between his own situation and that of his heroic prototype are seen as comic, ironic, and even tragic corroborations of modern man's diminished stature.<sup>76</sup> Undeniably, assessments of this kind are invited by Ulysses' network of clues, parallels, and allusions. Whether or not they are actually borne out by the text itself in a consistent way remains, of course, a subject for detailed explication. Readers as diversely oriented as Arnold Kettle, Erwin Steinberg, and Fritz Senn have nevertheless submitted that neither Joyce's proclamations of what he designed in Ulysses nor some of the interpretations commentators have based on Joyce's own views always stand up to the novel's real evidence.<sup>77</sup> Such inconsistencies must be recognized as the combined product of Joyce's experiential limitations, his sometimes questionable theories (for example, about what constituted feminine, Hellenic, and Jewish traits), and his compulsion for elaboration. Ultimately, the implications of a Bloom as they exist in Ulysses can only be ascertained by distinguishing between his fact and his fiction. In other words, the assumptions fostered by what Peter Egri terms the novel's "philological comedy" (p. 37) and by what Arnold Kettle acknowledges as its "vast apparatus of . . . verbal trickery" (p. 316) must be scrutinized



in the light of Bloom's textual consistency.

Applicable here, to be sure, is the truism that tensions often exist between what a writer may have planned to write or professed to believe and the finished product of his work. From Joyce's disclosures to Budgen (p. 16) we know that he saw in *Ulysses* Western literature's complete male. Odysseus was, by Joyce's appraisal, son and father, husband and lover, companion and king, conscientious objector and jusqu'aboutiste. According to this interpretation, the Odyssey is invested with the expression of domestic experience's essential qualities.<sup>78</sup> From Budgen (p. 17) we also know that Bloom, conceived by Joyce as a good man whose just and reasonable nature was to become more and more apparent in the course of the day, was interpreted as a complete and three-dimensional being. While assuming some of those parts which render him complete by Joyce's standards, however, the Bloom who finally emerges in Ulysses exhibits modern domestic contacts that serve not as points of juncture but rather their reverse. "Ithaca" discloses a ten-year history of the "limitation of fertility" (p. 736) as the distinctive feature of the Blooms' sexual relationship. From the evidence of Molly's monologue, it becomes apparent that coitus interruptus has been further restricted to Bloom's self-gratification on Molly's posterior (pp. 740, 777). A contributing cause, therefore, for the adultery of a healthy, not yet thirty-three-year-old wife, Bloom acquiesces to, even aids and abets, Molly's extramarital liaison in both fact and in fancy.<sup>79</sup>

A source of much controversy among Joyceans, the ambiguous husband-wife reunion that concludes the novel does little to confirm





any real reversal in the Blooms' conjugal relationship. On the one hand, the evasively worded section appears to be an affirming epilogue because of Molly's assent to a weary Bloom's request for breakfast in bed. This view is strengthened by her reiterated "Yes," a word Joyce deliberately selected for its faint pronunciation so expressive of a sleepy woman's murmurings and so evocative of non-resistance, relaxation, and abandonment.<sup>80</sup> Drawing from his word content and frequency analysis, Steinberg (pp. 221-228) asserts that there is little in a monologue centered on the self and heavily reliant on negative expressions and speech patterns to merit the reconciliatory or celebratory explanations some of his colleagues have ascribed to Ulysses' conclusion. Unfortunately, despite his disclaimer of defining "what a woman's role should or should not be" (p. 329, note 79), this segment of Steinberg's study is partially marred by the awkward interference of limited conceptions of masculine, feminine, and maternal characteristics. As a result, an attempt to question the serious acceptance of Molly's life-affirming and earth goddess affiliations is hampered by opinions (p. 232) that Molly is "adequate" as neither mother nor woman. More important, Steinberg's reading of the text must be challenged when he claims that Molly "denies the memory of her own dead son a place in her heart" (p. 229) on the basis of a perfectly natural attempt to avoid dwelling on what is for her, as it is for Bloom, a painful memory (U, p. 778).

But for the way in which it is argued, Steinberg's thesis is not without validity. Moreover, his contention that the "unsolvable problems" surrounding the human relationships in Ulysses arise from the fact that Joyce frequently "does not give enough evidence on which



to base secure conclusions" (p. 239) is well taken. It requires only an additional acknowledgment that the problems also derive from Joyce's saturation of his text with multiply suggestive and contradictory clues. Predilections for "happy endings" may lure us to place more weight on Molly's recognition of Bloom's virtues than on her attention to his frailties. They may also cause us to attribute greater value to her attachment to earliest intimacies than to her dissatisfaction with present estrangement. Consequently, the consent to an early morning rising to "just give him one more chance" (U, p. 780) from one who has also exclaimed "Im to be slooching around down in the kitchen to get his lordship his breakfast while hes rolled up like a mummy will I indeed did you ever see me running Id just like to see myself at it show them attention and they treat you like dirt" (p. 778) serves as a source of speculation. Speculation it must remain, however. Joyce's scheme, which appears here to equate the female nature with lack of consistency, admits of contrarieties without resolving them.

Speculation is not involved when Bloom's other domestic roles are scrutinized. As a lover his current attempts at Don Juanism are limited to a pseudonymous flirtation via correspondence and a bayside dalliance based on self-contained fantasies which terminate in auto-eroticism. Sonship, insofar as we are made aware of it, is described by points of non-contact with a shadowy father who appears either as the recollected suicide or the stage Jew of Nighttown (pp. 437-438) and an equally caricaturistic Irish mother (p. 438). Bloom's literal fatherhood is interpreted largely through the lost paternity resulting from the death of an eleven-day-old son and the fond concern extended





toward a fifteen-year-old daughter. Milly's geographical distance actually corresponds to her comparative absence from Bloom's mental space. Moreover, when Milly and her imminent womanhood are present in Bloom's thoughts, a connection with Molly is inevitable. Never far removed from the daughter, the mother is often identified with her, a fact clearly attested by Bloom's "Molly. Milly. Same thing watered down" (p. 89).

On the non-biological level Bloom hardly fares much better. Despite the multiple associations of paternal Bloom and filial Stephen established throughout Ulysses, their shared relationship is limited at best. Specific textual facts pertinent to their final encounter reveal that any paternity is created from Bloom's viewpoint alone.<sup>81</sup> Strongly colored by the day's mental evocations of the dead Rudy, it is dramatized in the brothel scene's conclusion. There the dead son's metamorphosis as a changeling child, complete with lambkin and Eton suit, Bloom stands over the unconscious Dedalus. The apparent identification, however, has rather serious qualifications. In the Eccles Street kitchen, where Stephen rejects Bloom's offer of shelter for the night, the "counterproposals alternately advanced, accepted, modified, declined, restated in other terms" (p. 696), in short, Molly's Italian lessons, Stephen's voice instruction, and further Dedalus-Bloom dialogues, have other connotations. We read further and learn that Bloom's paternity has not been restored:

What rendered problematic for Bloom the realisation of these mutually selfexcluding propositions?

The irreparability of the past: once at a performance of Albert Hengler's circus in the Rotunda, Rutland square, Dublin, an intuitive particolored clown in quest of paternity had





penetrated from the ring to a place in the auditorium where Bloom, solitary, was seated and had publicly declared to an exhilarated audience that he (Bloom) was his (the clown's) papa. The imprevidibility of the future: once in the summer of 1898 he (Bloom) had marked a florin (2s.) with three notches on the milled edge and tendered it in payment of an account due to and received by J. and T. Davy, family grocers, 1 Charlemont Mall, Grand Canal, for circulation on the waters of civic finance, for possible, circuitous or direct, return.

Was the clown Bloom's son?

No.

Had Bloom's coin returned?

Never (p. 696).

Tenuous at best and non-existent at their worst, Bloom's domestic ties can hardly be called ones that bond him either substantially or satisfactorily to any of the human beings in his immediate sphere. Isolated from the broader human environment around him as well, he is as self-contained as Stephen is. In essence, the only real connecting links we can assign Bloom are those which mark him as a member of the human species. Consequently, he presents an alternate form of that disengagement which involves Stephen's self-conscious but also deterministically unique response to a negative milieu.

Choice or, more accurately, the lack of it heightens the problematic nature of Bloom's representativeness. Neither history nor society offers the promise of positive options in Ulysses. As a result, Bloom's non-aggression and pacificism seem inevitable and desirable. But what reveals itself as non-violence in one light appears as permanent sterility and paralysis in another. As various readers of Ulysses have observed, a character whose life is predominantly interior and whose mind appears to be in a state of constant flux is himself really static and unchanging. Furthermore, his inner life is mostly



passive reflection.<sup>82</sup> Its activity arises from the interplay of impressions and associations. Incapable of action with issue, Bloom's moments of unproductive or ambiguous self-assertion are minimal and trivialized. Outside the request for breakfast in bed, the other major example appears in his confrontation with the Citizen. In a chapter that depends heavily on mock-heroic, however, Bloom's self-defense is comically deflated. Moreover, the retaliation to the Citizen's bigotry is not unlike the grosser forms of inaccuracy to which it responds. Depending on whether Mendelssohn refers to the eighteenth-century German philosopher or his Christian grandson, Bloom's list of Judaism's illustrious pillars is composed exclusively of Catholics (Mercadente and Felix Mendelssohn), the excommunicated (Spinoza), the heretic (Christ), and the atheist (Marx). Thus a vein of humor is injected which comically diminishes and deflates Bloom's defensive campaign.

Undeniably, the humor extended toward Bloom is compassionate. Yet neither it nor the verbal virtuosity that go into the character's creation mask the overwhelmingly negative implications of a Bloom existence. In his artist figure Joyce presents that evolution of the problematic hero whose assertions of autonomy and freedom in the face of a hostile environment are confined to a life of self-enclosed art. In his common man, however, Joyce has limited the possibility of the rejection of milieu to the denial of cruelties and patent absurdities. It is summarized by Bloom's "Flapdoodle to feed fools on" (p. 161) and by the vague articulation that "Love . . . the opposite of hatred" constitutes what "is really life" (p. 333). On the whole it cannot be said that Bloom's own non serviam holds any promise of creative issue.





It certainly offers little evidence of human control over the conditions of human existence or any alteration of their nature.<sup>83</sup>

What we encounter in Ulysses has equally and perhaps more troublesome counterparts in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. The tension created between design and outcome is chiefly produced by method and composition in Ulysses rather than by inconsistencies in its informing outlook. In attempting to embark on routes running counter to the Joycean one, Dos Passos and Döblin produce a number of serious contradictions and ambiguities that do not neatly resolve themselves with a Ulyssean admission of paradox. To both the American and the German, history had shown itself to be traumatic, violent, and disillusioning, and contemporary society only too readily demonstrated that fact. Manhattan Transfer's explicit criticism of the perversion of the American vision is seconded by Döblin's Alexanderplatz demonstration of another failed revolution and the dangerous persistence of the Wilhelmine era's false values. Indeed, the condition of Germany, as Döblin perceived it, is epitomized by a Berlin of the unemployed, the disenfranchised, the impoverished, and the maimed. In such an arena the dangers of socially retrograde tendencies are everpresent snares.<sup>84</sup> But indictments like these do not furnish the kind of severance from history that marks Ulysses. Bloom's retort to the Citizen "Force, hatred, history, all that" (U, p. 333) can be rearranged as the novel's underlying thesis that "History = force + hatred." It excludes belief in any change in the conditions of human life, particularly as manifested in collectivity. Unlike Joyce, from the lessons of contemporary history Dos Passos and Döblin conceded the potential



for new purpose, for transformed human existence, and even for a new collective destiny. Such concessions necessarily admitted progress and the ability of human beings to assert their will for effecting change. In what measure and manner these premises, which were integrated into both writers' artistic rationale, materialize in their novels can best be observed by once more juxtaposing design and outcome. The comparison reveals how far Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz progress beyond the picture of experience provided by Ulysses.

Translating humanity's norm as a domestic Everyman who is "neither fish nor flesh" (U, p. 321), Ulysses actually divests man of specific societal attachments and places him outside history as part of generalized humanity. In Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz the procedure is reversed. Generalizing aspects throw light on the meaning of the new realities instead of old ones. Doing so, however, they also rely on representative figures who are alienated from their environment or exist in a problematic relationship with it.

For the German novel social estrangement is directly related to the work's didactic function. As he explained when Alexanderplatz was in its early stages of preparation, the book found Döblin concerned with the social problem of people between classes and with the lesson of one who learns that his security in life derives not from being "respectable" but from finding the proper fellow-creatures (VG, p. 97). Exploring a multilayered reality that establishes the interconnectedness of the natural and social spheres, Alexanderplatz depicts a passage from isolation to integration. Literally cut off from society by the years in Tegel prison, Franz Biberkepf approaches it again under the





assumption that he can be "Anständig" (BA, p. 67). This petit bourgeois value<sup>85</sup> which dominates his apprehension of social existence is allied with an individualism expressed by the additional advice Franz offers to Gottlieb Meck: "lass dich nicht mit die Menschen ein, geh deiner eigenen Wege. Hände weg von die Menschen" (Idem.). En route toward his eventual transformation Franz engages in activities and aligns himself with individuals opposed to the desired "respectability" which is equally unconnected with what is really required of him. Responsible for the heavy blows he suffers, the blindly unreflective character of his behavior and activity shows itself in his assuming the roles of pornography peddler, Nazi, fence, and pimp, in his relationships with Reinhold and Mieze, and in the fatalistic withdrawal forming his response when actions and outlook produce results contrary to Franz's set expectations. In the symbolic translation of his catatonic stupor, where he is not only between classes and outside society but removed from time, space, and his own body, Franz's errors and their links with Lüders' deception, his own mutilation, and Mieze's murder are revealed to him. Instruction from a Death who speaks in Berlin dialect communicates life's contradictory aspect as "Zucker und Dreck" (p. 479) and the social imperative of reflection upon the consequences of one's actions. With the conquest of the Whore Babylon, a complex incarnation of the life-denying, non-integrating forces in Franz's milieu and experience which have both intimidated and attracted him, reconciliation can proceed.

As he convalesces, Franz Karl Biberkopf is equipped with far more than the new expression in his eyes detected by Eva. He now bears





a transformed outlook. Aware of the dangers of unthinking isolation, Franz is also cognizant of the perils of unquestioning affiliation, either as part of a wartime military machine or its civilian analogues. Reason is prerequisite to action; choice and responsibility replace blind fatalism. In addition, one who formerly cautioned Meck against involvement with people now knows "es ist auch schöner und besser, mit andern zu sein. Da fühle ich und weiss ich alles noch einmal so gut. Ein Schiff liegt nicht fest ohne grossen Anker, und ein Mensch kann nicht sein ohne viele andere Menschen" (p. 500). Thus, as he is ultimately designated "ein kleiner Arbeiter" (p. 501), Franz finally expresses solidarity with his fellows.

The potentiality of that new consciousness and unity is present in the interpolated lyrics of the military anthems which end the novel. Embodying two new antitheses, the call to arms is a reminder of the dangerous alliances of the past. It is simultaneously a hopeful anticipation of a new world and a route toward freedom. The open-ended aspect of Döblin's conclusion<sup>86</sup> is consistent with both the structural procedures enunciated in "Der Bau des epischen Werks" and the character of the evolving naturism and non-materialist socialism. Apropos of an ending that has proven problematic for all of Döblin's commentators, Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer (pp. 163-173) has rightly offered that the novel's finale can be explicated in terms of its formal necessity, its didactic appeal to the reader's consciousness, and the same "to be continued" aspect of Döblin's thinking which enabled him to end Unser Dasein with the epigram "Ende und Kein Ende" (UD, p. 478).

While Alexanderplatz specifically projects a broad reconciliation



at its conclusion, Manhattan Transfer does not. Instead it poses a rejection of an American variant of the Whore Babylon which reduces human activity to purposelessness or subordinates it to economic exigencies. Dos Passos' novel offers its own City of Destruction from which Jimmy Herf departs. Its corruption of a revolutionary aspiration is symbolized by the resemblance between Liberty and the mechanical Ellen Thatcher and by the diminution of Jefferson to Jefferson Merivale, an affluent bigot with visions of stemming the immigrant tide. Despite such features, Manhattan Transfer still conveys the possibility of something better. Quite early in the novel it is disclosed by the old waiter Marco, a character far closer to Dos Passos' actual sympathies of the period than the platitudinizing liberals represented by Jimmy Herf and Martin Schiff, or even the proletarian class-conscious Elmer Duskin. If he perceives that he may not witness the collective transformation during his own lifetime, Marco still persists in believing that the time "will come when the working people awake from slavery" (p. 39). The Italian anarchist's "I never see the dawn . . . that I dont say to myself perhaps . . . perhaps today" (Idem.) offers something of the much younger American's expectations even in the face of contradictory contemporary evidence. Given the admission of that future possibility, the novel's conclusion is a denial of estrangement. It appears as something more than a mere counterpart for the suicide escape of a Bud Korpenning or the transatlantic flight of a Densch. The Jimmy Herf who experiences a sudden gaiety and freedom upon leaving the city at dawn takes "pleasure in breathing, in the beat of his blood, in the tread of his feet on the pavement between rows of otherworldly





frame houses" (p. 404). With only "three cents for good luck, or bad for that matter" (Idem.), he hitches a ride in a large furniture truck uncertain of his destination but nevertheless aware that he will be going "Pretty far." Resulting from conscious deliberation, this departure is an act of personal liberation and self-assertion. It contains no hints that an individual action paralleling Franz's awareness will necessarily produce or merge with the kind of "new dawn" envisioned by Marco. But from all the non-fictional evidence of Dos Passos' tenuous gropings for coherence at the time, the American's open conclusion appears to signify something more positive than defeat. Furthermore, no less than Döblin's finale, it is also an appeal for the reader's reflection.

Similar in purpose, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz are likewise distinguished by features that contradict their positive potentiality or emphasize its purely speculative nature. Doing so, these textual traits reveal what might be called the Modernist impasse that is so marked in Dos Passos' and Döblin's work. Novels not divested of belief in collective destiny and a certainty that human beings possess capabilities for transforming the conditions of their existence are novels which do not view history as inevitably a cause for despair and denial. Yet they proceed no further than their respective generalizing affirmations. Thus, while they seek to overcome some of Modernism's classic symptoms,<sup>87</sup> they are unable to offset them with any real alternatives. In addition, through their own character-milieu relationships the American and German novels counteract the affirmations they contain. It is here that the works assume additional



Ulyssean qualities.

Scant issue proceeds from existence in Ulysses, where representative man is an autonomous entity composed of successive subjective reactions to stimuli. However, neither Alexanderplatz nor Manhattan Transfer succeed in advancing a picture that is much different. Just as in Ulysses, characters that are formed from associative complexes function as aggregates of stimulus-response operations. With Franz Biberkopf, for example, existence is dominated by a series of uncontrolled associations that emerge from the very depths of his being. This is evident from the outset as we witness the initial stages of the first Berlin re-entry. After seeing the display posters for Elternlos outside a cinema, Franz enters the theatre and views a film centering around a series of amorous adventures. In turn, the film so affects him that he becomes acutely aware of his need for a woman. A series of encounters begins with a prostitute on Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse. Two days later Franz finds himself with Minna, the sister of his deceased mistress. Past and present merge as Minna becomes identified in Franz's perception with Ida. Franz further reveals the elementary associational processes of his mind in those moments of self-representation through dialogue and interior monologue. Following the early experience of fear and isolation in Berlin, during which the ex-convict inwardly expresses the hope that the roofs don't slide from the housetops, his self-confidence, whether increasing or decreasing, is measured in these terms.<sup>88</sup>

Slightly more sophisticated than Franz in their mental operations, Dos Passos' New Yorkers are none the less not far removed from the kind of processes that account for the Berliner's behavior.<sup>89</sup> In the world





of Manhattan Transfer, however, basic drives confront us less frequently than do responses cultivated by the society for its self-perpetuation. The difference can be viewed in Manhattan Transfer's own depiction of publicity's impact. A prime example is found in the immigrant Jew's encounter with the drugstore window's Gillette razor advertisement featuring the cleanshaven "face of a man who had money in the bank" (p. 11). It triggers off a clandestine shaving session during the temporary absence of wife and daughters. More advanced stages of development show this kind of cause-and-effect reaction in something like George Baldwin's newspaper scanning. It immediately associates a milkman's injury with a profitable damage suit (p. 50).

Admittedly, the associative character of these behavior patterns is integral to the projected portrayal of negative modes of existence in Manhattan Transfer. The novel's procedures therefore underscore individual experience which is the automatic consequence of being acted upon rather than the product of freedom and choice. For human mass production Gillette smoothness and Arrow collars are both appropriate metaphors and stimuli. In Alexanderplatz Franz Biberkopf functions unthinkingly and fatalistically under a false orientation toward life and the world. Lack of cohesion and purposiveness are also appropriately expressive here of the early disorientation in a newly freed prisoner. They anticipate as well the psychic disintegration that climaxes in Franz's symbolic dismemberment. Yet as a battlefield and playground of sensations,<sup>90</sup> Franz is also a passive, self-contained unit throughout most of the novel. The question arising from his transformation is whether or not the newly born Franz Karl Biberkopf is, in fact, less





isolated and more purposeful than his former self. A humble worker, specifically, an assistant porter in a medium-sized factory, he now has an awareness of the desirability of human solidarity and of the necessity for reason and reflection. But nothing in Alexanderplatz suggests the evolution to the kind of creature who acts productively in a collectivity advancing toward the finale's freedom and new world. The being who so much desired Ordnung and Ruhe (pp. 85, 98, 99, 211, 213), all the while pursuing an individualism as unnatural as it was asocial, was once able to find order and tranquility in Nazi propaganda and in criminal activities. It is true that he has finally found something else by accepting his subordination to the inevitability of death, his position within a living spectrum of multiple phenomena, and the existence of life's contradictory nature. However, the new knowledge leaves him a largely passive entity.

Something of this predicament was eventually conceded by Döblin himself. In that same 1931 letter which criticized Julius Petersen's seminar for treating the Joyce connection in the usual way, Döblin admitted that he had been unable to repeal the active-passive dualism of his thinking in Alexanderplatz. His hopes to bring Franz Biberkopf to the active stage (that is, "das Ich über der Natur") instead of merely the passive "Ich in der Natur" had not materialized in the course of writing the novel. The conclusion, as he put it, was a bridge in need of that other shore which a complementary volume might provide (B, pp. 165-166). The problem of providing consciousness with the impetus for action, as earlier discussion has revealed, is inherent in Döblin's thinking of the entire period. It is especially evident in the work



that finally materialized as the novel's "second volume." Since it illuminates the problematic nature of Alexanderplatz, some consideration of Die Ehe is appropriate for inclusion here.

As a sequel to a Berlin novel bearing the prescription "Erkennen und Verstehen" on its jacket, an equally experimental Berlin drama incorporating the motto of Döblin's socialism, "Wissen und Verändern!" (E, p. 39), most likely seemed a more direct and publicly accessible vehicle of expression. It was undeniably engendered by Döblin's long-standing attention to marriage as an institution perpetuating the evils of class society. Yet Die Ehe received immediate stimulus from discussions with Fritz Sternberg and Brecht about the writer's function in contemporary German society and from an affiliation with a dramatic collective which also included Piscator, Brecht, Lania, Mehring and Mühsam. The trio concerned itself with discovering the particular revolutionary principles for the isolated middle class in order to analytically expose the Nazi program's untruthfulness; the larger group turned its attention to suggestions, proposals, and experiments for an engaged theatre. Although Döblin's project did not live up to the political standards of his associates, the Munich police found it sufficiently provocative to ban as Communist propaganda two weeks after its opening at the Münchener Kammerspiele on November 29, 1930.<sup>91</sup>

The prohibition, which drew protests from even a former non-ally like Thomas Mann, is a gauge of how the play's overall impression actually contradicts Döblin's design. As he indicated in the production suggestions prefacing the published version, Die Ehe dealt with the destruction of the old marital and familial institutions by an economic





system which simultaneously prevented a new ordering of human relationships. What might be best grasped as a "Volksstück" (E, p. 11) depicted two scenes of proletarian marriage revealing the devastating effects of the housing shortage and the notorious penal code prohibition of abortion. A bourgeois episode dramatized how wedlock in that class, treating women as little more than commodities and assets in commercial transactions, was indispensable to the survival of capitalism. Die Ehe also included a prologue rejecting the kind of culinary art Döblin had long censured in his theatre criticism and an interlude exposing social abuses through pictures and satiric commentary.

Within the play Döblin, who subsequently explained that Die Ehe concretized aspects of his evolving non-materialist socialism, clearly sought to transcend material reality. Consequently, the Lehrstück's specific economic and political phenomena are presented from a particular generalizing vantage point. As in Alexanderplatz, it incorporates them in revelations about natural existence. In Die Ehe, however, the effects are more strikingly incongruous. When, for example, the unemployed husband of a desperate woman recently killed by an illegal, unsafe abortion asks "Und was soll ick machen" to a chorus which includes fellow workers, a spokesman advises nothing more than "Da musst du marschieren, mein Junge, mit allen, vom Himmel ist keinem was runtergefallen, da heisst es erst mal, die Fäuste ballen, und dann heisst, mit die Sohlen knallen" (E, p. 39). In the scene devoted to marriage among the bourgeoisie we are shown its commodity value within the existing economic order. During most of this sequence capitalism is represented by a large background projection with a smokestack emerging



from its head, typewriter and telephone wires from its hands, a factory front as its chest, and square bright windows as eyes (p. 68). Toward the end of the scene the human being hidden behind the monstrous structure emerges (p. 88). An elderly, feeble, stooped creature, he manifests a vincibility corroborated by the finale that is obviously a further evolution of the novel's ending. In Die Ehe the chorus cites the inevitable destruction of capitalism's hegemony. The same chorus concludes with the hopeful, "Freunde, liebe Freunde, seid unverzagt, einmal für uns der Morgen tagt, einmal kommt Brot und Freiheit und Licht für uns und für jedes Menschengesicht" (p. 107). But it does so only after the naturistic principle of eternal change is reiterated, presumably to establish the relationship between the natural and social spheres and to emphasize that inevitable change in nature's scheme must have its counterpart in the realm of human relations. Regardless of its underlying naturist perspective, however, it is precisely a particular materialist viewpoint discredited by Döblin that is strengthened by the evidence of Die Ehe. As Ernst Ribbat has observed in his lucid and informative study of the dramatic experiment, the Lehrstück actually substantiates a Marxist analysis. Die Ehe demonstrates that capitalism socializes all human relationships and implies that only collective action rather than individual truth is meaningful for the purpose of bringing about change.<sup>92</sup>

Die Ehe's duality is but a further symptom of the kind of conflict between design and outcome that materializes in Alexanderplatz. Far more rudimentary in its development, Dos Passos' perspective cannot be described in terms of the same degree of tension. Nevertheless, the





implications of his novel's text are heavily weighted against the potential implicit in Marco's "perhaps" and Jimmy Herf's "Pretty far." Indeed, the only alternative offered as response to the societal scheme depicted in Manhattan Transfer is provided by Jimmy Herf's concluding act of self-assertion. Early in the novel he has rejected the mechanization and alienation indispensable to the survival of the prevailing system. Both are contained within his mental image of "Jimmy fed in a tape in and out the revolving doors, noon and night and morning, the revolving doors grinding out his years like sausage meat" (p. 120). His resolution that "Uncle Jeff and his office can go plumb to hell" (Idem.) has its counterpart in the ending's farewell to the City of Destruction. Taken by a character who has tended to withdraw to childhood poses and self-pity and to indulge in "mooning over things that are past" (p. 322), the move is understandably a positive sign. Somewhat like Stephen Dedalus' refusal, however, it is an inevitable choice for one who, in the words of his prosperous cousin, has been "a misfit from way back" ( p. 386). Jimmy's own opinion of himself is harsher: "a parasite on the drama of life" who "Never mixes in" (p. 320). Although this assessment occurs within the context of reflections on his reportorial status and the excitement of bootlegging, Jimmy's self-judgment has broader significance. It goes without saying that "mixing in" the kind of atomized collective life Manhattan Transfer exposes is impossible and undesirable. Yet the novel holds no clues that Jimmy might be capable of engagement, were experience fundamentally different. Neither does it intimate that he might proceed to transform that experience. Consequently, all that really emerges from this act of





liberation is the view of an individual poised on a threshold with even less collective consciousness than the variety artificially attributed to Franz Karl Biberkopf.

Jimmy's individualistic option hardly materializes for the remaining population of Manhattan Transfer. The mechanization he envisaged in the ticker tape-revolving door translation of himself transforms Ellen Thatcher into a marionettelike creature aware of imprisonment in her own metallic shell. Elsewhere it paralyzes a derelict alcoholic shouting in an "inhuman" voice, "I cant, dont you see I cant" (p. 376)? Instead of the humanizing of machine culture, Manhattan Transfer presents us with the machinelike metamorphosis of human beings. Their impotence is captured by the aspiration of an inebriated and suicidal Stan Emery, "Kerist I wish I was a skyscraper" (p. 252). The only immediately realizable possibilities in the novel are the two routes permissable in a rigidly circumscribed sphere: either the accommodation and adaptability of the Congo Jakes or the passive victimization of the Bud Korpennings and Anna Cohens. Insofar as they are allowed, of course, action and non-action are determined by the imbalance and disintegration created by industrialism and technology under capitalism.

As a sphere and condition of existence New York is, to paraphrase Volker Klotz (p. 342), the cause of complaints and curses from almost all of its inhabitants. But "a goddam town" (p. 247), we might add, is also run by "A bunch of goddam crooks" (p. 110). In his survey of the narrated city Klotz (p. 411) has established Döblin's Berlin as a battleground antagonistic to Biberkopf in his struggle for life. Like



the American critic Charles Child Walcutt, the German scholar elsewhere posits Dos Passos' metropolis as a succession of waves and tides that carries along with it inhabitants whose positions are fixed within a narrow zone.<sup>93</sup> Actually, there is a close resemblance between the Berlin antagonistic to Franz as long as he errs and that New York so inimical to communal translation into Dos Passos' "sentient whole." Neither arena of counterproductive activity and passivity permits more than fragmented existence, and both are characterized largely by criminality.

In Döblin's novel the underworld through which Franz passes is little more than an extension of bourgeois society at large.<sup>94</sup> Franz himself expresses the capitalist entrepreneur's credo to the anarchist. While he agrees that "Deine anständige Arbeit ist ja Sklaverei" (p. 297), he also declares "ich lass andere für mich arbeiten" (p. 296). Elsewhere the swindle by Otto Lüders and the appropriation by Gusta and Paul Gerner of already stolen goods that entraps them rather than the original thieves offer nothing more than variants of the schemes and values of the dominant class. Such adaptations are even more apparent in the transactions of the Pums gang and in the independent trio of the tinsmith and the two wheelwrights who establish a profitable partnership prepared to expand its operations outside Berlin. Needless to say, the human trafficking that forms the pimp-prostitute relationship is an additional expression of what has more respectable counterparts in business and in the kind of marriage Döblin explored in part of his Lehrstück. Beyond its mirror image of the broad society, the stratum presented in Alexanderplatz reveals tenuous human ties that barely hide





the lack of solidarity and cohesion marking the links between Franz and Lüders, Franz and Reinhold, and Pums and his men.

Manhattan Transfer underscores the connection between criminality and the prevailing social order even more emphatically. As parallels for the kind of episodes that occur in Alexanderplatz, the American novel offers messenger-boy robbers like Nicky Schatz and female fences who deal in stolen goods. It presents a Dutch Robertson who, thanks to his exploits as part of a holdup team, briefly enjoys a hiatus from unemployment and hunger. During Francie's hospitalization that reprieve very briefly brings with it the luxury of respectability. However, as in the case of Gusta and Paul Gerner, the profits from small-scale enterprises are minimal. Schatz pockets an impressive wad of bills that turns out to be only stage money and a watch that has little commercial value. Once apprehended, both Dutch and Francie receive maximum sentences of twenty years' imprisonment from a judge seeking to demonstrate that it is not possible "to buck the law of God and man, and private property" and "wrench by force from peaceful citizens what they have earned by hard work and brains" (p. 391). Like the Gerners and Otto Lüders, the Robertsons and the Schatzes can only achieve by "forceful wrenching" what is accessible to a dominant class protected by its legal authority. Greater business acumen distinguishes the fraudulent operations of a Prudence Promotion Company. Of necessity then, when Jake Silverman is finally arrested by the police, he is accorded a degree of courtesy that hardly camouflages a certain respect. But the Silvermans with strings of aliases whose fortunes are on the wane and the Congo Jake-Armand Duvals who are first gaining ascendancy along with Park Avenue respect-



bility are relatively low in the hierarchy established by Manhattan Transfer. Above them rank bigamists free from prosecution (James Cunningham) who outfit themselves at Brooks' Brothers and dine with bank presidents at the Salmagundi Club (p. 336). In close proximity, but exerting more immediate and pervasive influence, can be found the trio of Tammany boss McNiel, uptown lawyer and budding politician Baldwin, and corporation executive Densch (pp. 288, 316). This active and overt collusion of government and business supersedes the more genteel coincidence of interests formerly peculiar to a Blackhead and the city politicians (p. 327). Manhattan Transfer does not, of course, stop at the municipal level. The national and international implications are contained within as brief an acknowledgment as Densch's irate complaint about his wife's dress buying: "She must think the war's still on" (p. 363).

For the far-reaching disintegration and alienation it exposes to the reader, Manhattan Transfer suggests no antidote. By comparison, Alexanderplatz purports to reveal something different through the new consciousness of its own norm for humanity, the type Döblin elsewhere designated the "creature of the age." In reality, however, there is only a slight difference between the German novel's utopian fellow feeling and individual truth and the affirmation of progress, change, and solidarity that the voices of Marco and Elmer Duskin manage to express in Manhattan Transfer. All that Alexanderplatz offers is the existence of a broad reconciliation counterpoised to its opposite tendency. Moreover, as in Manhattan Transfer where that potential is most succinctly communicated in the exhortations of anarchists or soapbox





orators, Alexanderplatz translates that reconciliation more specifically and lucidly in the orations of its own anarchist (pp. 291-299) than in its conclusion. Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer (p. 177) has convincingly argued that the open conclusion of Alexanderplatz conforms to Döblin's interest in stimulating his readers to reflection upon their own existence. Nevertheless, like Döblin's Wissen und Verändern!, the novel fails to answer any questions about a course of action and signals the contradictions and ambiguities that are German equivalents for the American uncertainties in Manhattan Transfer. Any integration is only hypothetical and tenuous.<sup>95</sup>

Works which leave us with hypothetical potentiality and furnish, more than anything else, evidence of unresolved disintegration obviously do not succeed in providing the kind of coherent translation of individual and totality that can rightly claim epic dimensions appropriate to a new age. Individual and community merge no more in either novel than they do in Ulysses, a work Joyce once described as an "epic of two races"<sup>96</sup> but which actually displays a humanity with ties to its species alone. Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz confront us with more developed symptoms of the nineteenth-century conflict of man with bourgeois ideology and society that is inherited by an aggravated under Modernism. Yet neither the new collective myth of mass man suggested at the end of Alexanderplatz nor the kind of mass existence reconciled with individuality intimated by Manhattan Transfer is sufficiently expanded to order disordered contemporaneity in the novels. That contemporaneity is ultimately arranged and interpreted by no coherent future-oriented myths. Organization is provided by the support





of antiquity instead.



## Problematic Parallels and the Ordering of Experience

By now T. S. Eliot's particular perception of Ulysses' major achievement has become one of the more frequently cited tributes paid Joyce by a contemporary. The somber Dial view of Ulysses' continuous and systematically manipulated parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity as nothing less than "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (p. 483) is undeniably an indirect commentary upon Eliot's own efforts in The Wasteland. Properly speaking, the kind of balanced technique he describes here is more in keeping with Anglo-American procedures than Irish ones. But despite this qualification and the decidedly Eliotesque overtones of apocalypse, the interpretation of the "mythical method" of Ulysses is a good gauge of its real significance. As we know, Joyce depended far less on Homer than on his intermediaries, either in the form of adaptations like Charles Lamb's The Adventures of Ulysses or commentaries like Victor Bérard's Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssée, which advanced Semitic origins for the Odyssey and furnished Ulysses with its "Jewgreek is greekjew" (U, p. 504) equation.<sup>97</sup>

Initially communicated by his confidants, Joyce's expansion, reversal, and reconstruction of Homeric models has elicited varied opinions regarding the extent of its importance for a reading of the work.<sup>98</sup> No doubt some of the controversy surrounding the issue would have been avoided if Joyce had retained the Homeric chapter





headings of his manuscript. Instead, he left their restoration to his interpreters. Amid the plethora of correspondences in Ulysses' vast analogy system the Homeric ones are hardly the most visible. Hence, without the author's post-publication elucidation that his work's title was no mere caprice, hints provided, for example, by Buck Mulligan's proposals to Hellenize Ireland (p. 7) or by the Cyclopean designation of Bloom as "Noman" (p. 727) easily went unnoticed. It is true enough, as Harry Levin (p. 76) has remarked, that awareness of many of the more esoteric intricacies involved in the old fable's retelling is not a prerequisite for the work's appreciation and enjoyment. Indeed, the kind of updating that metamorphoses Nestor's heifer sacrifice to Mr. Deasy's absorption with foot-and-mouth disease was certainly more momentous to Joyce than it could ever be to his reader, even one as astute as Levin. Nevertheless, to dismiss the parallels as mere architecture, to classify them exclusively under the headings of mock epic or ironic commentary, or to value them as no more significant than the novel's other correspondences and analogies is to ignore precisely what Eliot grasped, albeit in his own terms. Contemporizing Homer in Ulysses is equivalent to providing order and cohesion for experience perceived as otherwise lacking both. There is, to be sure, nothing new in the literary creation of past-present analogies. Under Modernism their novelty resides in their exploitation to impart form to an allegedly formless present now inimical to the old myths' and fables' integrating vision. In this, Ulysses is a major innovator.

Despite their authors' non-Joycean orientation toward the integrative potential of modern life, Manhattan Transfer and Alexander-



platz also rely on a flexible utilization and reworking of non-contemporary supports for structuring and interpreting their naturalistic narratives. Necessarily missing from either novel is that element of obscurity distinctive to Ulysses. Although their links are only fully comprehended at the books' conclusions, the present-past analogies in Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz are never veiled. Moreover, they are set within easily recognizable frames demarcating the collective voyages undertaken in Dos Passos' New York and Döblin's Berlin. Far from arbitrary, the fusion of biblical reverberations and journey adaptations presents evolutionary patterns with implications for the novels' new experiential realities. In their own ways the total fabrications are as important and as carefully designed as their Irish counterparts. They certainly merit closer attention than is customarily devoted to them in individual treatments of either novel and in non-influence studies of the works' affinities with either each other or with Ulysses.<sup>99</sup> For both this reason and the fact that they dramatically translate the effects of the Modernist condition, their problematic parallels offer the clearest evidence of their kinship with Ulysses. Their complementary relationship is most readily apprehended by drawing upon Joyce's example as the basis for comparison.

Innovative by twentieth-century standards, Joyce's appropriation of the Homeric example as a paradigm of human experience has age-old antecedents. The ancient Greeks themselves perceived in "the complex and contradictory character of Odysseus a pattern of their lives and aspirations."<sup>100</sup> Transmitted largely through his Triestine language pupils of Hellenic origins and Italian names and a small number of





expatriate Zurich Greeks casually known from restaurant and tavern socializing,<sup>101</sup> Joyce's limited personal acquaintance with Greece appears to have inspired him with a particular brand of philhellenic tendencies. However, in the words of Franz Biberkopf, modern man is not Greek (BA, p. 57). Neither, we might add, was Joyce, despite his idiosyncratic formulations of ethnic equivalences. Wanting in the communal coherence and cohesion that pervades the ancient epic on almost every level, Ulysses hardly reinstates any kind of Homeric integration. But a work which uses a non-contemporary background as an expression of human life's unchanging configurations does, in effect, reintroduce rudimentary vestiges of an ancient ordering.

Against the Ithacan's ten years' wandering and domestic reconciliation, the evidence of an advertising canvasser-cuckold's one-day odyssey through Dublin weighs heavily in favor of their parodistic relationship. Within individual episodes this is easily demonstrated in the irony, satire, and burlesque used to modernize the Homeric antecedents. The latter-day defense against a Fenian Polypheumus rendered in naturalistic dialogue, colloquial exposition, and mock heroic strongly implies the non-equation of Greek and Dubliner. Humorous discrepancy is increased by the concluding pursuit and the terminal summary of Bloom's Elijah-like ascension as "a shot off a shovel" accomplished "at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street" (U, p. 345). Homer's innocent beach encounter between Odysseus and Nausicaa is transformed into the juxtaposition of separate fantasies, one set excessively sentimental, the other considerably less mawkish. The most easily identifiable effects





of the total analogy, these examples are also its least problematic. Richly comic reductions like the ones cited, however, do actually form equations with their prototypes if we recognize that the correspondences established in Ulysses are those of general situations rather than of specific incidents. Joyce's various Homers transcribed the permanent mode of existence; he himself recorded the possible variations within that norm.<sup>102</sup> In the register of Ulysses they comprehend apparent comic contradiction and essential experiential conformity. When contradiction and conformity are accompanied by ambiguity, as in the Blooms' concluding domestic reunion, variations increase and lend themselves to multiple interpretations.

The equivocal impression created by Joyce's correspondences of past and present is, in fact, his analogy system's chief feature. It is also a more elaborate expansion of the interconnected myriad disparities, likenesses, denials, and affirmations produced literally and symbolically throughout the novel. Paralleling Bloom's Buddha-like slumber position (p. 771), Molly's listening attitude is that of "Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbant, big with seed" (p. 737). Despite her day's liaison with Boylan, Joyce's Dublin variant of the maternal principle is, as we know, neither "big with seed" nor "fulfilled." In this sense, Molly the fertility symbol is an appropriate partner for her mate. Gazing upon his anatomy in the bath, Bloom may consider "the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower" (p. 86); however, Bloom the abstainer hardly qualifies as a prolific fertilizing agent. Joyce, of course, is not content to let this opposition rest here. Descending from the heights of the bath to the depths of the bed,



he offsets Blooms' hymn to male genitalia with Molly's convictions about the aesthetic superiority of the female over the male form: "of course compared with what a man looks like with his two bags full and his other thing hanging down out of him or sticking up at you like a hatrack no wonder they hide it with a cabbageleaf the woman is beauty of course" (p. 753).

Ultimately, the dominant aspect of Joyce's use of analogy is that duplicity effectively summarized by the Ithaca section's identification of Bloom as "Everyman or Noman" (p. 727). In Ulysses the actual effect of the parallels, one which allows for continuous elaboration, derives from the complex interplay of equation and negation. Simultaneously, it offers a variant of this doublesidedness of experience through which 1904 Dublin encompasses both change and continuity within an endless cycle of repetitions reflecting "that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (p. 731).

Given its particular corroboration that there is "Nothing new under the sun," Ulysses displays a world where change is more surface than fundamental and contrarities are resolved within a scheme balancing them paradoxically as old verities. Proceeding along alternate routes, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz reveal the use of past-present confrontations for the expression of changing patterns. Interpretive repositories of newly emerging designs, however, only





heighten the unresolved character of American and German encounters with specific non-Ulyssean realities. Taken together, Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz represent two branchings, so to speak, from the same initial course. The German work responds, in a very particular sense, to what the American novel poses. It does so, however, in a way that ultimately shifts Alexanderplatz back into the vicinity of Ulysses. Thus the questions raised by Manhattan Transfer remain largely unanswered.

Because Dos Passos saw the imperative of unmasking inadequate secular symbols invested with destructive potency, Manhattan Transfer employs its temporal juxtapositions for specific demythicizing purposes. These are achieved by the popularizing adaptation of familiar elements of biblical lore as a structural underpinning and interpretive pattern for the novel's collective experience. Formed from a network of phrases containing ancient allusions, inclusions and alterations of scriptural verses and metaphors, and humorous updatings of preaching and prophets, Manhattan Transfer's non-contemporary reverberations appear in its narrated, dialogue, and interior monologue sections as well as in its prose poem inserts and chapter headings. While its carefully fabricated merging of past and present gives Ulysses the amplitude by which to playfully explore paradox, Manhattan Transfer's sometimes comic effects expose a different and predominantly serious duality. The double-faceted character derives from the reversal and secularization of the progression compressed into the Bunyanesque City of Destruction/Celestial City antithesis. As a result, Ninevah-on-the Hudson evolves from a hopeful Genesis to that complex of corruption whose "burden" is unfolded



in the final chapter.

Most obviously recorded in the opposition of success and failure describing the lives and careers of Manhattan Transfer's humanity, the dualism itself is pervasive throughout the novel. Its broader implications have been worked into the fabric of the opening section. They can be detected in the early dinner parties which, unlike Virginia Woolf's, are transmuted into no new forms of communion. The one that occurs at the Merivales during Jimmy Herf's childhood, for example, is marked by chatter incorporating biblical metaphors for promise. Jefferson Merivale's complaints about the visible changes in the city's human composition are prefaced by the dating of his and Emily's move to their present West 72nd Street address "about the time the Ark landed" (p. 101). Uttered in jest apropos of the more recent immigrants who inspire her husband's lamentations, Emily Merivale's "It's the New Jerusalem" (Idem.) sustains the play upon expectations and arrivals with an interjection combining popular, historical, and sacred (Rev. 21:2) associations. Intimations of salvation have their counterbalance in the same episode when Maisie Merivale retaliates against Jimmy's childish name-calling with warnings about the "danger of hellfire" (p. 107). Even earlier there has been dinner table talk of blasphemy, lightning flashes, and fireballs in the vapid conversation of the restaurant scene presided over by affluent and coarse middle-aged males and their more elegant and youthful female companions (pp. 30-31).

In conjunction with the city as extended metaphor for contemporary life, the opposition of extremes is already contained in the





prose poem "Metropolis" (p. 12). Its New York, whose "millionwindowed buildings will jut glittering, pyramid on pyramid like the white cloudhead above a thunderstorm," is linked up with long-vanished Greek and Roman imperial capitals and a Constantinople whose former glory is now merely mirrored in the play of light upon its minarets. Through the series' inclusion of the splendid centers of Babylonia and Assyria Dos Passos compresses additional resonances into the portrait that re-enforces the ominousness of the gathering thunderheads. Despite its evidence of assorted vices and even suicidal destruction, however, this section's New York seems rather remote from the Babylon inveighed against by Isaiah and Jeremiah. It appears equally distant from the Ninevah denounced by Jonah. Toward the end of Manhattan Transfer, however, New York has joined its forerunner on the Euphrates and, more particularly, its ancestor on the Tigris.

The Old Testament Ninevah undergoes a transformation from the great city of Genesis (10:11) founded by Ashur to that place which the Book of Nahum prophetically envisages laid waste by the god of the Hebrews. Only two books earlier the Assyrian capital is spared from destruction by a deity impressed with the repentance of citizens who have heeded the preaching of Jonah. Manhattan Transfer hardly lays physical waste to New York. Instead, it shows the ravages brought on by a dream's metallic metamorphosis. By the last chapter, headed by a fragment of the Book of Nahum's opening verse, the city has attracted not only the curses of its more respectable residents but also the condemnation of a deranged and derelict Jonah. Mixing his Testaments, Dos Passos makes the latter-day prophet the self-proclaimed confidant





of the Archangel Gabriel and provides him with a doomsday sermon delivered before two young New Jersey Mediterraneans. In this appearance the contemporary seer is far less placid than in his earlier manifestation as "the old man with the hempen beard who sleeps where nobody knows" and sits in the midst of his picklestand offerings "like Jonah under his gourd" (p. 129). There is, of course, obvious good humor in the modernization of the biblical prophet's self-relegation to a booth on the city's east side while waiting to see what would become of the Ninevah spared from divine wrath (Jonah 4:5). At the same time, the updating expresses what is presently in progress in the novel's development: the exhibition of the city's further evolution in the second transitional section. When "Jonah" re-emerges in the novel's third formal division, reversing as it were the biblical order of his affiliation with Ninevah as preacher and passive observer, it is only after interrelated themes and illustrations of sterility, destruction, and purposelessness have come to dominate the text. The news that Ninevah's destruction is once again postponed, if only because Jonah has convinced his angelic companion to delay "foreclosure" for "a week or so" (p. 381), has more than comic coloration. Within Manhattan Transfer itself there is little evidence of what might reverse the course mapped out; however, as we know, Dos Passos himself did not exclude the possibility of a truly communal translation of the metropolis.

The city's welding into a "sentient whole" and the extended fusion of the collective experiences it embraced required those new "myths" about which Dos Passos speculated in his non-fiction. They were not



yet apparent to him; nevertheless, the American could at least expose the hollowness of what served in their stead, whether as the success myth promulgated under industrialist capitalism or as its numerous new idols and the sham dehumanizing values they epitomized. Thus Manhattan Transfer exploits and develops a system of urban symbols interpreting, among other things, conformity ("Arrowcollars"), materialism ("Dollars"), tawdriness ("Great Lady on a White Horse"), and short-lived pleasures ("Nine Days' Wonder," "Rollercoaster"). It heightens their impact by interconnecting them with other multiply significant images of varieties of destruction (for example, "Steamroller," "Fire Engine," "Revolving Doors").<sup>103</sup>

Noted by G.-A. Astre and taken up in E. D. Lowry's amplification of the French critic's suggestions,<sup>104</sup> the themes and imagery associated with Manhattan Transfer's center of modern life frequently resemble their counterparts in Eliot's Wasteland. Dos Passos, who had himself read Frazer on the Old Testament (14C, p. 298), however, develops his own "mythical method" for purely secular purposes. They are based on an understanding of reality which seeks new and man-centered means for balance and order. Consequently, the demythification apparent in Manhattan Transfer extends to Dos Passos' modernization of biblical lore.

In many of its books and chapters the Old Testament reads like a series of victorious campaigns over rivals, some of them fertility symbols affiliated with agrarian cultures, by a jealous deity of desert origins seeking to retain his supreme authority. Portions reveal as well that the threats to hegemony were not always divine and sometimes as urban as they were rural. Semitic equivalents for Promethean





affirmations of humanity can be observed in the Tower of Babel and even in the man-centered cities which also attracted the god's wrath.<sup>105</sup> Unconcerned with the resurrection of sacred altars, Dos Passos considered contemporary priorities which included a new supremacy of man. Therefore, the destructive evolution of Ninevah is no consequence of denials of divinity. It originates in the perversion of a man-centered vision now in need of rearrangement and expansion. In the world presented by Manhattan Transfer redemptive form and balance can be provided only by a true secularization of the New Jerusalem. Moreover, an existence yet to be fused into coherence awaits no interpretation neatly positing the coexistence of extremes in an equation of past with present. According to Manhattan Transfer, the past, reinterpreted so that it contains and emphasizes the essential qualities of the present, can do nothing but corroborate the present's need for a future-oriented ordering.

Manhattan Transfer leaves us with only an imperative. Alexanderplatz attempts to carry it out through the disposition of new realities within its author's evolving naturist-socialist scheme. Not exclusively marked by the passive accommodation of the individual within a cosmic arrangement, Döblin's thinking in the 1920s envisaged parallels--subsequently to be re-elaborated as "resonances" in Unser Dasein (pp. 168-175)--for natural relationships in the social sphere. In addition, it admitted a direct progression from ideal to activity without managing to realize the transformation even theoretically. The steadily developing ahistorical resolution for what originally confronted Döblin as historical evidence has immediate consequences in those contradictory



aspects of Alexanderplatz which concerned us earlier. It also has a direct correlation with the ordering of the novel's "realistic" base by that "überreale Sphäre" so highly valued by Döblin for its transcendental and interpretive importance. That level distinguished by the adaptation and manipulation of non-contemporary parallels (parallels as obvious, popularized, and modernized as those in Manhattan Transfer) contributes to an expanded narrative. In this way a total context is established for the depicted contemporary situation.

From the technical standpoint, the German novel's analogy systems can be considered the kind which locate Alexanderplatz midway between a Ulysses of detailed point-by-point adaptations and a Manhattan Transfer of much looser procedures. Lacking the apparent invisibility of Joyce's temporal links, Döblin's ties between past and present are, nevertheless, completely apprehended only when the narrative has run its course. Inside the didactic frame emphasizing the exemplary nature of Döblin's Lumpen-everyman, that narrative assumes the proportions of Jedermann which neither the novel's detractors nor its partisans have failed to recognize. Complete elaboration of the modern morality, which retains the principal progression from ignorance to insight in a heedless life culminating in death's summons, is revealed in the Buch Insane Asylum sequence. "Circe"-like, the madhouse provides an Expressionistic recapitulation of the entire novel. Within this flexible structure, however, Döblin further transforms and orders the contemporary situation. Through the biblical interpolations which reinterpret the present, a progressive development fusing Stationdrama and Scripture is outlined. It simultaneously provides Franz Biberkopf





with additional aliases. They include Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Job.

Döblin's utilization of biblical material, rarely quoted directly and usually reinterpreted, is consistent with the technical procedures he applies to the novel's other textual components. Interpolated as separate chapters, paragraphs, or else bracketed, these analogies are close to those created by Dos Passos. They resemble Joyce's Homeric references only when abbreviated as recurrent images and phrases in apparently unrelated contexts. Much like their American counterparts, the German parallels function diversely and specifically as commentary, foreshadowing, and leitmotif, and are variously rendered. Generally adapted rather than quoted Luther, they also appear as complete Döblinesque inventions. The novel's rendering of the curse upon the serpent in Eden, for example, ranks it "mit" (BA, p. 144) rather than "vor allem Vieh" (1. Mose 3:14). A first appearance of the Whore Babylon in Book VI (p. 260) condenses and divides some of the verses of Offenbarung 17:1-6 and heightens the effects of the text by the present tense adaptation of what is preterite in Luther.<sup>106</sup>

The stylistic, formal, and interpretive transformations which accompany Döblin's exploitation of the Bible achieve a double effect. Such alterations in form and content intensify the identification of Franz as a generalized type engendered by the didactic frame. Simultaneously, their mode of presentation creates an implicit comic contrast between the actual biblical antecedent and Döblin's updated variant. Colloquial verbs and dialect, for example, are frequently introduced into quasi-biblical language; the dramatized dialogue between an unidentified Voice and a despondent Job in Book IV now assigns the





Armenian merchant to a cabbage patch-dog kennel location. The Paradise narrative of Genesis which opens Book II begins as a typical folk tale, soon followed by strains of folk songs and Humperdinck. It retains its naïve quality in the compressed direct address which later (p. 144) measures out punishment to serpent, Adam, and Eve. Any discrepancy between past and present is, in this way, contained within the interpolations themselves. Thus Döblin creates a limited, if less subtle, counterpart for the most obvious effects of the past-present juxtaposition in Ulysses and a variant of the burlesque updating represented by the evolution of Jonah in Manhattan Transfer. As in Dos Passos' novel, where comic opposition is essentially a surface feature, however, Döblin's analogies are predominantly projections of a serious nature. The kind of humor affiliated with playful paradox which is so frequently augmented by multiple non-Homeric resonances in Ulysses has no real equivalent here. Resembling Dos Passos' symbolic network of urban patterns which establish the contours of modern life, Döblin's parallels present a design for existence with implications for his reader. To achieve this end, Alexanderplatz relies upon the support of subordinate narratives and analogies, such as the parables of Zannovich, the celluloid ball, and Bornemann. Whether introduced abruptly into the text or provided by character-narrators like the Galician Jews serving as Berlin's benevolent Jonahs, this additional underpinning is didactic in function.

An analogy system that is more developed than the one in Manhattan Transfer also proves to be more troublesome. This other Ulyssean feature ultimately arises from the representation of experiential



totality. The route mapped out for Franz Biberkopf is no less complete than its near reversal in Dos Passos' metropolitan trajectory or in the odyssey described for Joyce's domestic Everyman. From a free adaptation of elements from Genesis, Job, Ecclesiastes, Jeremiah, and Revelation within the Jedermann pattern, Döblin reconstructs a movement from Creation to Last Judgment, from First Fall to Redemption. It is appropriately prefaced by a prophetic counterpart to the narrator's prologue summary. Specifically referring to Babylon's pride, destruction by the sword, and necessary repentance, the opening section's verses from Jeremiah (51:9, 50:35) outline the novel's complete presentation (BA, p. 19). Both sequential and cumulative, its development is realized through a temporal juxtaposition which provides the past with the essential qualities of the present in a manner reminiscent of Manhattan Transfer. Consequently, Franz's Berlin re-entry, his rudimentary level of understanding, and his naïve anticipation of a self-reliant, respectable life amid old haunts are preceded by the aforementioned folkloric adaptation of Genesis. "Das war eine einzige Freude den ganzen Tag im Paradies" (p. 49), we are told. As he must, however, the serpent inevitably enters Eden, this time in the guise of the false friend Otto Lüders who betrays Franz's trust and ruins his new commercial and amorous adventures. Consequences of the Fall manifest themselves for Franz as acute disgust with the world and withdrawal to his room. Loss of innocence, such as it is, is soon transmuted into other afflictions for the Berliner. Prominent among these are his Abraham-like sacrifice of Mieze, his mistress, to her future murderer, and ensnarement in the nets of the Whore Babylon





once he takes up the roles of fence, pimp, and burglar. In the catatonic stupor induced by Mieke's death and the abortive attempt to avenge her murder, Franz vows not to rise again, even if the Doomsday trumpets sound. Rise he does, however, when Death calls him to judgment. From double confrontation with the betraying he mistakenly trusted and the trusting he mistakenly betrayed, his repentance initiates rebirth, more specifically, a restoration to health and a radical change in outlook.

Within this series of correspondences, the most dominant and comprehensive is that of Job. First introduced as Book IV's obtuse, suffering outcast, he must, like Franz, be reintegrated in a broad scheme. At first the connections between the Berliner and the Man of Uz seem fairly limited: an apparent association between Job's despondency over his catastrophes and his weakness and Franz's Book IV moroseness following the setback from Lüders' betrayal. Biberkopf's trials only begin to assume Job-like proportions through subsequent hardships of physical mutilation and personal grief. When these are introduced, the loss of limb and mistress are consequences of his own behavior rather than externally imposed afflictions. Apprehension of them changes, however, within Buch Asylum. There, re-echoing Job, Franz screams long into the night before the next day's healing. When Death finally dismisses the vanquished Babylon, now more hag than visionary harlot, with his "Wir haben hier beide nichts mehr zu sagen" (p. 488), the entire presentation is thrown against a background confirming Franz as the testing ground of opposing forces. Implicit in the parallels established earlier, it is only illuminated in this section when almost all the earlier analogies are reworked. As it finally



emerges, the full development assumes the proportions of an ongoing conflict of contradictory principles.

It is precisely from this accumulation of eternal resonances that the parallels in Alexanderplatz become troublesome for an ordering and interpretation of its present-day realities. What Döblin's disposition of experience really reveals is an embrace of contrarities that forms a more serious analogue for the scheme in Ulysses. Their most telling effects can be seen in the final metamorphosis of Franz Karl Biberkopf. The resolution to assess situations and people before undertaking any course of action presents no difficulties within the confines of Döblin's Everyman frame. Indeed, as Albrecht Schöne (pp. 300-301) has explained, Döblin's modernization of the old parable's emergence from darkness to light easily substitutes an updated purification through decisions about insightful behaviour for the old conversion to belief and the participation in grace and salvation. Ostensibly, that new outlook will offset the fatalism and passivity which were associated with the previously erroneous individualism and the manifestations of disastrous self-assertion. But by broadening the narrative's dimensions to show that the events of Franz's life have not been under his control at all, Döblin only substitutes an ancient coexistence of extremes that meet in man as well as in the natural scheme containing him. Like Job between Jehovah and Satan, like Faust between God and Mephistopheles, Franz has been the battlefield for Death and Babylon. The dualism implicit here extends to the "Zucker und Dreck" acceptance of life as neither exclusively Adamic Eden nor Apocalyptic Babylon and comprehends the dangers and





promise in a finale of diverse military anthems. It is also present in Franz's decomposition to his constituent plant and animal elements (p. 473) which is soon followed by reconstitution when he calls together "alles . . . , was zu ihm gehört" (p. 480). In other words, as shape and coherence for a formless present Alexanderplatz offers only the coexistence of universal antitheses. It ultimately suggests the kinds of Oriental myths which went into the making of Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun and Manas.<sup>107</sup>

By 1932 Döblin's Lesezirkel afterthoughts on the novel noted this dualism in his stress on the portrayal of the dissolution and order forming the world (BA, p. 506); by 1948, focusing on the Abraham-Isaac and abattoir interpolations, his "Epilog" proposed "Opfer" as the novel's principal theme (AzL, p. 391). In light of Döblin's constantly changing specific emphasis, his 1928 "Zukunftspläne" remarks, the self-criticism of the aforementioned 1931 letter to Petersen, and all the related conflicting and complementary evidence of the period, neither of the retrospective interpretations is adequate by itself. Furthermore, both corroborate the fragmentation in Döblin's thinking and even in his personality. Be that as it may, the ahistorical, quasi-mystical accents of the later comments are not incongruous with the kind of arrangement of experience imparted by Döblin's parallels. As a response to the imperative recognized by Manhattan Transfer, Alexanderplatz furnishes no new future-oriented secular vision. On the contrary, it reinterprets old truths in a very particular variation of that reconciling embrace of contrarieties and equivalences to be found in Ulysses.





## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### The Ambiguities of Non-Resolution

As defined in the present study, Modernism, a particular cultural, historical, and class phenomenon, comprehends the self-conscious creation of artistic form appropriate to the expression of perceptibly changed subject matter and a yet non-integrating apprehension of reality. An extension and reflection of the larger social fragmentation responsible for a crisis in collective and individual consciousness, its most telling effects are to be noted in the problematic inter-relationships it poses between man and milieu, and, by extension, artist and society. By no means its exclusive translations, both Ulysses and the two novels for which it served as a special catalyst typify major aspects of the general condition in prose fiction. Outgrowths of their authors' respective dissatisfactions with artistic and social traditions and with prevailing literary tendencies, all three works project reactions to contemporary history, either as incomplete accommodations or as outright disengagement. At the same time they are interpretations of the physiognomy of the age which outline general patterns in an existence lacking apparent cohesion.

This recognition of Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Berlin Alexanderplatz as complementary revelations of Modernism facilitates the kind of broad grasp of their common character which has been



customarily lacking throughout the history of their troublesome association. American and German works which have all too frequently been considered imitative and derivative are found to have legitimate ancestries in their creators' earlier work, to derive impetus from a confluence of interartistic sources, and to be inspired by closely related artistic rationales that are markedly un-Joycean in nature. The isolation of Modernist symptoms in the synthetic drive toward a new expansiveness and expressiveness exposes areas of overlap wider than the mere sharing of similar techniques. Not the least significant of these is the endowment of the novel with a protean aspect that obliterates its traditional generic contours and the outlines of both its experience and its characters. Finally, admission of the problematic interpretive consequences of Modernism, whether allied with a Mallarmé-like movement toward autonomous art or an unsuccessful Apollinairean reconciliation of artistic priorities and social necessity, permits an assessment of the kindred ambiguities and paradoxes present in Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz.

Beyond the shared attributes and distinctive differences which have received attention here, additional facets of the Ulysses-Manhattan Transfer-Alexanderplatz relationship provide a convenient summary of their Modernist affiliation. Common symptoms differ in their intensity among the three works. Strictly speaking, Ulysses and Alexanderplatz represent Modernism as a dilemma. In one we are offered an inward and backward-looking art created entirely from a private universe and detached from contemporary exigencies; in the other we are confronted with only the choice of quasi-religion. Without slipping away into





metaphysics, Manhattan Transfer successfully achieves its specific satiric purposes. It does so despite its disregard for the link between the contemporary imbalance it portrays and that earlier national history it tends to idealize.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously, however, Dos Passos' novel exhibits Modernism as a predicament based on an oversimplified dichotomy between individual freedom and mass subjugation.

That Joyce, Dos Passos, and Döblin continued their pursuit of appropriate form is only too apparent from Finnegans Wake and from the heterogeneous novels subsequently produced by the American and German writers. Like their predecessors, these latter works were inextricably bound up with the contemporary non-literary production of Dos Passos and Döblin. The later efforts of all three writers also furnish proof of accommodations not yet achieved in Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz. They materialize as an embrace of cyclical patterns in the permutations of human experience, a spiritual conversion which replaced resolutions about insightful behavior with participation in grace and salvation, and a sometimes retrograde populism which looked toward an agrarian democratic past as the means for restoring balance and freedom. Bearing these Viconian, Christian, and Jeffersonian epilogues in mind, we can view Ulysses, Manhattan Transfer, and Alexanderplatz as thresholds where the ambiguities of non-resolution are only temporary.

Important landmarks in the routes embarked upon by their authors, the three works are no less significant as indicators of the general tendency in which they participate. However, in viewing them as representative examples of Modernism, it is important to avoid



extravagant conclusions. Considerations of Modernism, either in its purest forms or its imminent mutations, too often interpret a specific phenomenon as an irreparable universal condition, much like the First Fall, and endow it with the permanent features of human existence. In short, criticism takes on the perspective inherent in some of the literature it describes, analyzes, and evaluates. Commentary frequently offers apocalyptic generalizations about an entire world's spiritual impoverishment and valuelessness. It even advances normative assumptions about solitary and marginal creators, themselves reflective of humankind's predicament, which extend far beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries actually confining such judgments. Several decades after the apogee of Modernism, for example, we find one of its eminent heirs observing that "Joyce's purpose is to bring us through the hell of modern consciousness, to master the schizophrenia it induces, to purge us, to redeem us"<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added]. Elsewhere we are told by a scholarly observer that Bloom "may be one of the few remaining paths to the Promised Land in our time."<sup>3</sup>

Insofar as such claims are applied to Ulysses and not to the understanding of those who advance them, they seem to require Joyce's own corrective. It might be wise to recall here Joyce's response to the critics' prevailing and almost exclusive post-publication concern with his novel's motifs and symbolism: "If only someone, if only one reviewer would say the book was funny."<sup>4</sup> Were more emphasis given to its comic character, Ulysses might provoke fewer extravagant generalizations and inspire more of the laughter desired for the work by its creator. If that were so, posterity's major interpretation of Ulysses





might well resemble the kind desired for his own work by one of Joyce's most recent aficionados. Speaking of his own philological comedy, Guillermo Cabrera Infante has claimed, "I would prefer everyone to consider the book solely as a joke lasting for about five hundred pages."<sup>5</sup> Only time will tell, of course, if there are implications for Ulysses in this appraisal the expatriate Cuban writer, another advocate of disengagement, has offered for Tres tristes tigres. For the present, however, we can observe with some accuracy that the enduring character of Ulysses resides in its richness of humor and language rather than in its paucity of vision.

Precisely because their authors attempted to grapple with what Joyce deliberately avoided in Ulysses, a very special longevity is established for Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz. The later testimony of their individual and shared literary traditions verifies that the problematic condition at once confronted and epitomized by the two novels is still much in evidence. Extended lineage of this kind even reaches outside the novel to film. A blindly unreflective and still socially isolated Franz Biberkopf has recently reappeared as the homosexual protagonist in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's Faustrecht der Freiheit, a work displaying many of the difficulties posed by both Alexanderplatz and Manhattan Transfer. Indeed, more of the troublesome legacy of Dos Passos and Döblin can be seen in all contemporary Western cinema which seeks engagement while becoming mired in formalism and appealing largely to the bourgeoisie.

No less apparent than Modernism's protracted effects is the need to reword what a leading exponent once called its major imperative,





namely, "making the modern world possible for art."<sup>6</sup> In this the legacy of Dos Passos and Döblin reveals itself again. Breaking through the Modernist impasse continues to require "making art possible for the modern world." Moreover, overcoming the Modernist paralysis still demands new translations of the closely allied "How can one write today?" and "What is to be done?"



## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Virginia Woolf, "The Leaning Tower," Collected Essays, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), II, 163.

<sup>2</sup>John Dos Passos, "Introduction," Three Soldiers (1921; rpt. New York: Modern Library, 1932), p. viii.

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Alfred Döblin, "Ulysses von Joyce," Aufsätze zur Literatur, ed. Walter Muschg (Olten: Walter, 1963), p. 290.

<sup>2</sup>John Dos Passos, The Best of Times: An Informal Memoir (Toronto: New American Library of Canada, 1968), p. 148.

<sup>3</sup>Sinclair Lewis, "Manhattan at Last!," Saturday Review of Literature, 2 (5 Dec. 1925), 361, and John Dos Passos' "Manhattan Transfer" (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926), pp. 3-4; Touchstone, "Books," New Yorker, 28 Nov. 1925, p. 18; Henry Logan Stuart, "John Dos Passos Notes the Tragic Trivia of New York," New York Times Book Review, 75 (29 Nov. 1929), 5, 10; Lloyd Morris, "Skimming the Cream from Six Months' Fiction," New York Times Book Review, 75 (6 Dec. 1925), 2.

<sup>4</sup>H. L. Mencken, "Fiction Good and Bad," American Mercury, 7 (April 1926), 508. See also Fanny Butcher, rev. of Manhattan Transfer, by John Dos Passos, Chicago Tribune, 9 Jan. 1926, p. 9; Cyril Hume, "Manhattan Transfer," Bookman, 62 (Feb. 1926), 718.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, Hans Sochaczewer, "Der neue Döblin," Berliner Tageblatt, 58, No. 492 (18 Oct. 1929), supplement, 1; H. A. Wyss, "Ein neuer Roman Alfred Döblins: Berlin Alexanderplatz," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 50, No. 2162 (8 Nov. 1929), n. pag.; Walter Muschg, "Alfred Döblin: Berlin Alexanderplatz," Schweizer Monatshefte, 9/10, No. 10 (1930), 48-49.

<sup>6</sup>Alfred Döblin, Briefe, ed. Heinz Graber (Olten: Walter, 1970), p. 150; Hans Henny Jahn, "Alfred Döblin: Berlin Alexanderplatz," Der Kreis, 6, No. 12 (Dec. 1929), 735.

<sup>7</sup>Klaus Neukrantz, "Berlin Alexanderplatz," Die Linkskurve, 1, No. 5 (Dec. 1929), 30-31; Alfred Döblin, "Katastrophe in einer Linkskurve," Das Tagebuch, 11, No. 18 (3 May 1930), 694-698; Johannes Becher, "Einen Schritt weiter!," Die Linkskurve, 2, No. 1 (Jan. 1930),





1-5; Otto Biha, "Herr Döblin verunglückt in einer Linkskurve," Die Linkskurve, 2 No. 6 (1930), 24.

The conflict occurs within the context of a broader development which began as "Gruppe 25," a coalition of diverse left-leaning writers including Döblin and Becher. For further discussion, see Leo Kreutzer, Alfred Döblin: Sein Werk bis 1933, Sprache und Literatur, 66 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970), pp. 134-147.

<sup>8</sup>See Axel Eggebrecht, "Zu Döblins Erfolg," Die Weltbühne, 26, No. 6 (4 Feb. 1930), 208-211; Walter Benjamin, "Krisis des Romans: Zu Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," Die Gesellschaft, 7, No. 6 (June 1930), 563. On the subject of montage in Ulysses, see Harry Levin, James Joyce: A Critical Introduction (New York: New Directions, 1960), pp. 88-89; Craig Barrow, "Montage in James Joyce's Ulysses," Diss. Colorado 1972.

<sup>9</sup>See Werner Neuse, Die literarische Entwicklung von John Dos Passos, Diss. Giessen 1931 (Giessen: Glagow, 1931), p. 108; Werner Türk, "John Dos Passos," Die Literatur, 35, No. 7 (April 1933), 377.

<sup>10</sup>"A Wallenstein Novel," Times Literary Supplement, 22, No. 1, 105 (22 March 1923), 93; "Recent German Novels," rev. of Berge Meere und Giganten, Times Literary Supplement, 24, No. 1, 236 (24 Sept. 1925), 612; "Herr Döblin's [sic] Exciting Utopia," rev. of Berge Meere und Giganten, New York Herald Tribune Books, 1, No. 57 (18 Oct. 1925), 7.

<sup>11</sup>Breon Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin: At the Crossroads of Berlin Alexanderplatz," Contemporary Literature, 12, No. 2 (Spring 1971), 185, suggests a correlation between the translator's identity and the work's reception. Mitchell's observations occur here in a published extract from his "The Place of James Joyce's Ulysses in German Fiction 1922-1933: Translation, Critical Reception and Impact on Three Representative Novels," Diss. Oxon 1968. Although its publication has been indefinitely suspended, the larger work will eventually appear as James Joyce and the German Novel (Athens: Ohio Ohio University Press).

<sup>12</sup>Félix Bertaux, "Lectures allemandes," La Nouvelle Revue Française, 35 (1930), 131; Robert Minder, "Begegnungen mit Alfred Döblin in Frankreich," Text und Kritik, No. 13/14 (June 1966), 58.

<sup>13</sup>See Karl Geiser, "Berlin Underworld," Nation, 133, No. 3455 (23 Sept. 1931), 314; Arthur Ruhl, "Franz Biberkopf Returns," Saturday Review of Literature, 8, No. 8 (12 Sept. 1931), 117; "Alexanderplatz," Times Literary Supplement, 30, No. 1, 559 (17 Dec. 1931), 1024; Michael Sadleir, "The Soul of Berlin," New Statesman and Nation, NS 2, No. 43 (19 Dec. 1931), 788; Nathan Asch, "Slums of Berlin," New Republic, 68, No. 878 (30 Sept. 1931), 185.

<sup>14</sup>Viking Press Spring Catalogue, Fiction (1931), p. 1., courtesy of Edwin Kennebeck, Viking Press (New York, New York) Archivist.



<sup>15</sup>See, for example, Sadleir, 788-789, and "Alexanderplatz," Times Literary Supplement, 1024, in conjunction with "Recent German Fiction," Times Literary Supplement, 29 (20 March 1930), 243. See also H. C. Harwood, "Alexanderplatz. By Alfred Döblin," Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art, 152, No. 3974 (26 Dec. 1931), 817; "Fiction. Some Foreign Novels," Spectator, No. 5, 396 (28 Nov. 1931), 744; Edith Shackleton, "A German James Joyce: Alfred Döblin," Evening Standard, No. 33 (29 Oct. 1931).

<sup>16</sup>Percy Hutchinson, "A German Experiment in Fiction," New York Times Book Review, 13 Sept. 1931, p. 4; Florence Haxton Britten, "Victim of this Civilization," New York Herald Tribune Books, 8, No. 1 (13 Sept. 1931), 3.

<sup>17</sup>See Asch, 184; Geiser, 313-314; Louis Kronenberger, "German Labyrinth. Alexanderplatz, Berlin by Alfred Döblin," Forum, 86 (Oct. 1931), ix-x; Fanny Butcher, rev. of Alexanderplatz, Berlin, by Alfred Döblin, Chicago Daily Tribune, 12 Sept. 1931, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>See Joseph Warren Beach, "Abstract Composition: Döblin," The Twentieth Century Novel: Studies in Technique (New York: Century, 1932), p. 512; Jethro Bithell, Modern German Literature 1880-1938 (London: Methuen & Co., 1939), p. 417.

<sup>19</sup>Günter Grass, "Über meinen Lehrer Alfred Döblin," Akzente 14, No. 3 (1967), 290.

<sup>20</sup>Richard Stover Donnell, "John Dos Passos: Satirical Historian of American Morality," Diss. Harvard 1960, II, 828-829 n. 8.

<sup>21</sup>Dos Passos to Melvin Landsberg, Dos Passos' Path to U.S.A.: A Political Biography (Boulder: Colorado Associate University Press, 1972), pp. 254 n. 41, 243 n. 45, 244 n. 4. See also Dos Passos, "Contemporary Chronicles," Carleton Miscellany, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1961), 26; "What Makes a Novelist," National Review, 20, No. 2 (16 Jan. 1968), 30.

<sup>22</sup>I am indebted to Joris Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin: Einfluss oder Analogie?," in Materialien zu Alfred Döblin "Berlin Alexanderplatz", ed. Matthias Prangel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 140-141, for attention to Adolf Hoffmeister, "Döblin am Alexanderplatz," Rozprawy Aventina, 6, No. 2 (1930-31), 301-302. See also Döblin, "Mein Buch Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Berlin Alexanderplatz. Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf, ed. Walter Muschg, 2nd ed. (Olten: Walter, 1964), p. 507. Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin," 186, discusses the typescript and quotes from it.

<sup>23</sup>See, Hoffmeister, 301-302; Döblin, "Aussenseiter der Naturwissenschaft," Vossische Zeitung, No. 306 (31 Dec. 1927), 1; Döblin, Die deutsche Literature (im Ausland seit 1933). Ein Dialog zwischen Politik und Kunst, Schriften zu dieser Zeit, 1 (Paris: Science et





Littérature, 1938), p. 45; Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin," pp. 144-145; Robert Minder, "Alfred Döblin zwischen Osten und Westen," in Dichter in der Gesellschaft: Erfahrungen mit deutscher und französischer Literatur (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1966), p. 172. Without any mention of the American's earlier city novel, Minder uses this differentiation as a way of affirming Döblin's independence from Dos Passos.

<sup>24</sup>See Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin," pp. 139-140. More detailed versions of the survey can be found in his "De invloed van Joyce en Dos Passos op Alfred Döblin. Een historische en methodologische Studie," M.A. Ghent 1967; "Alfred Döblin und die Weltliteratur (1900-1933). Aspekte und Probleme," Diss. Vrije Universiteit Brussels 1972, pp. 184-211.

<sup>25</sup>See, for example, Hermann Meyer, Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst. Zur Geschichte und Poetik des europäischen Romans (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1961), pp. 25-26; Walter Jens, "Uhren ohne Zeiger. Die Struktur des modernen Romans," in Statt einer Literaturgeschichte, 5th ed., rev. (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1962), p. 49; Hermann Pongs, "Dichter des Nihilismus," in Romanschaffen im Umbruch der Zeit. Eine Chronik von 1952 bis 1962, 4th ed., rev. (Tübingen: Deutsche Hochschullehrer-Zeitung, 1963), pp. 53-56.

<sup>26</sup>See, for example, Walter Muschg, "Döblins grösster Erfolg: zu Berlin Alexanderplatz," Der Monat, 13, No. 152 (May 1961), 46; Albrecht Schöne, "Döblin: Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Der deutsche Roman vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart: Struktur und Geschichte, ed. Benno von Wiese (Düsseldorf: August Bagel, 1963), II, 292; Hansjörg Elshorst, "Mensch und Umwelt im Werk Alfred Döblins," Diss. Munich 1966, p. 69; Timothy Joseph Casey, "Alfred Döblin," in Expressionismus als Literatur. Gesammelte Studien, ed. Wolfgang Rothe (Bern: Francke, 1969), p. 637; Werner Welzig, Der deutsche Roman im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert, 2nd ed., rev., Kröners Taschenausgabe, 367 (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1970), p. 113; Fritz Martini, "Alfred Döblin: Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Das Wagnis der Sprache: Interpretationen deutscher Prosa von Nietzsche bis Benn, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Klett, 1956), p. 357; Martini, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, 11th ed., Kröners Taschenausgabe, 196 (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1961), p. 557; Martini, "Alfred Döblin," in Deutsche Dichter der Moderne, ed. Benno von Wiese, 2nd ed., rev. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1969), p. 329.

<sup>27</sup>See Albrecht Schöne, p. 318; Joseph Strelka, "Der Erzähler Alfred Döblin," The German Quarterly, 23, No. 3 (May 1960), 205; Keith McGill, "A Critical Examination of Experimental Aspects of Alfred Döblin's Early Work with Particular Reference to Berlin Alexanderplatz," Diss. New England, Armidale, New South Wales 1963, pp. 94, 141-142; Theodore Ziolkowski, Dimensions of the Modern Novel. German Texts and European Contexts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 107-108; R. Minder, "Alfred Döblin zwischen Osten





und Westen," p. 171; Muschg, "Döblins grösster Erfolg," 47; Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Berlin Alexanderplatz, p. 512, "Zwei Romane Alfred Döblins," in Von Trakl zu Brecht: Dichter des Expressionismus, Sammlung Piper, Probleme und Ereignisse des modernen Wissenschaft (Munich: R. Piper, 1961), p. 223.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Ernst Ribbat, Die Wahrheit des Lebens im frühen Werk Alfred Döblins, Münstersche Beiträge zur deutschen Literaturwissenschaft, 4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), pp. 191, 211; Klaus Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin. Werk und Entwicklung, Bonner Abreiten zur deutschen Literatur, 22 (Bonn: Bouvier Herbert Grundmann, 1972), pp. 287-290; Viktor Žmegač, "Alfred Döblins Poetik des Romans," in Deutsche Romantheorien: Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Romans in Deutschland, ed. Reinhold Grimm (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1968), p. 300; C. Zalubska, "Parallele der Erzähltechnik in den Werken von Alfred Döblin und James Joyce," Studia Germanica Posnaniensia, 1 (1971), 59-67; Duytschaever, "Döblin und die Weltliteratur," pp. 237-272.

<sup>29</sup> Helmut Becker, "Untersuchungen zum epischen Werk Alfred Döblins am Beispiel seines Romans Berlin Alexanderplatz," Diss. Marburg 1962, pp. 156-178, 202-219. The opposing view that Döblin was originally more involved with the story of Franz Biberkopf than with Berlin is advanced by Manfred Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Alfred Döblins Roman Berlin Alexanderplatz," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, 20, No. 3 (1971), 392.

<sup>30</sup> Francis Pugh Lide, Jr., "Berlin Alexanderplatz in Context: Alfred Döblin's Literary Practice," Diss. Illinois 1966, p. 20. Lide's findings are set forth in his discussion of the work's genesis (pp. 173-198).

<sup>31</sup> John Dos Passos, "Manhattan Transfer. Aus dem Roman einer Stadt," Die Neue Rundschau, 38 (1927), II, 26-41; Rudolf Kayser, "Vorbemerkung," Ibid., 26; Fritz Landsberger, "Alfred Döblins Manas," Ibid., 97-102.

<sup>32</sup> See Lide, pp. 220-237; Döblin, "Erster Ruckblick," in Döblin and Oskar Loerke, Alfred Döblin--Im Buch--Zu Haus--Auf der Strasse (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1928), pp. 9-109.

<sup>33</sup> See Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 391-423.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Louis Huguet, "L'Oeuvre d'Alfred Döblin ou la Dialectique de l'Exode 1878-1918. Essai de psycho-critique," 2 vols., Thèse Doctorat ès-Lettres Paris-Nanterre 1968-71; Matthias Prangel, Alfred Döblin, Sammlung Metzler, 105 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973), p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> Melvin Friedman, Stream of Consciousness: A Study in Literary Method (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 245.





<sup>36</sup>See, for example, Neuse, p. 70; Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, p. 437; Türk, 377; Mason Wade, "Novelist of America: John Dos Passos," North American Review, 244, No. 2 (Winter 1937-38), 356; Claude-Edmonde Magny, L'Age du roman américain (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1948), p. 123; Eugene Arden, "Manhattan Transfer: An Experiment in Technique," University of Kansas City Review, 22, No. 2 (Dec. 1955), 57; Charles Child Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 282; Georges-Albert Astre, Thèmes et structures dans l'oeuvre de John Dos Passos, Collection "Thèmes et Structures," 1 (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1956), I, 140, 160; John Wist Canario, "A Study of the Artistic Development of John Dos Passos in His Novels from One Man's Initiation-1917 through U.S.A.," Diss. Washington 1963, p. 50; John McCormick, The Middle Distance. A Comparative History of American Imaginative Literature: 1919-1932 (New York: Free Press, 1971), p. 95.

<sup>37</sup>Astre, I, 167; Donnell, I, 187, and II, 835 n. 29, 850-852 n. 10; E. D. Lowry, "The Lively Art of Manhattan Transfer," PMLA, 84 (1969), 1628-1638. Attention to Joyce's influence on the pre-Manhattan Transfer novels can be found in Donnell, I, 166, and II, 846-847 n. 4, 835 n. 12; Canario, pp. 33, 44-56; Astre, I, 114-115.

<sup>38</sup>Marshall McLuhan, "Technique vs. Sensibility," in Fifty Years of the American Novel, ed. Harold C. Gardiner (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), rpt. in Allen Belkind, ed., Dos Passos, the Critics, and the Writer's Intention, Crosscurrents/Modern Critiques (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 231-234; Astre, I, 198.

<sup>39</sup>Sharon Spencer, Space, Time and Structure in the Modern Novel (New York: New York University Press, 1971). For a survey of Dos Passos' reputation among U.S. critics, see Paul Baker Newman, "The Critical Reputation of John Dos Passos: 1920-1950," Diss. Chicago 1958.

<sup>40</sup>Compare, for example, Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature (1942; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 265-282; Walcutt, pp. 280-289; Walter B. Rideout, The Radical Novel in the United States 1900-1954: Some Interrelations of Literature and Society, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966); Harry Levin, "What was Modernism?," Massachusetts Review (Aug. 1960), rpt. in Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 289 with Neuse; Magny, pp. 117-158 et passim; Astre.

<sup>41</sup>Blanche Gelfant, "John Dos Passos: The Synoptic Novel," in The American City Novel (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), pp. 133-174; Edward Daniel Lowry, "'The Writer as Technician': The Method of John Dos Passos, 1925-60," Diss. New York 1960, pp. 44-85, and "Manhattan Transfer: Dos Passos' Wasteland," The University Review, 30, No. 1 (Oct. 1963), 47-52, and "The Lively Art of Manhattan





Transfer," PMLA, 84 (1969), 1628-38. For treatments less European in style than Lowry's, see, for example, Charles T. Ludington, Jr., "An Individual's Focus on Existence: The Novels of John Dos Passos," Diss. Duke 1968; John David Magee, "An Analytical Study of John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer," Diss. Ball State 1971; James B. Lane, "Manhattan Transfer as a Gateway to the 1920s," Centennial Review, 16 (Summer 1972), 293-311.

<sup>42</sup>See, for example, Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Un juego de espejos enfrentados," in La novela hispanoamericana, ed. Juan Loveluck, 3rd. ed., rev., Colección Letras de América (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1969), pp. 110-111. For specific admissions of Dos Passos' impact on the part of both Yáñez and Fuentes, see their interviews in Emmanuel Carballo, Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo II (Mexico City: Empresas Editoriales, 1965), pp. 291, 434, and Carballo's comments, p. 323.

<sup>43</sup>See Friedman, p. 251; Leon Edel, "Literatur and Psychology," in Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective, ed., Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), p. 102; Bithell, p. 451; Breon Mitchell, "Hans Henny Jahn and James Joyce: The Birth of the Inner Monologue in the German Novel," Arcadia, 6, No. 2 (1971), 44-71.

<sup>44</sup>See Grass, 290-309.

<sup>45</sup>For Döblin's disrepute in Germany following the Second World War, see Walter Heist, "Der Fall Döblin," Neue deutsche Hefte, No. 44 (March 1958), 1114-1116. Examples of the newer approaches to Döblin's work are offered by Jacob Erhardt, "Alfred Döblins Roman-Theorie unter Berücksichtigung einiger Parallelen zum 'Nouveau Roman'," University of Dayton Review, 6, No. 3 (1969), 35-41; Michel Zérafra, "Le Roman et sa problématique de 1909 à 1915," in L'Année 1913. Les Formes esthétiques de l'oeuvre d'art à la veille de la première guerre mondiale, ed. Liliane Brion-Guerry, Collection d'Esthétique, 9 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), I, 632-670; Duytschaeffer, "Döblin und die Weltliteratur." For discussion of the relationship between Döblin's early novels and Futurism, specifically, Marinetti's Marfaka le futuriste, see Armin Arnold, Die Literatur des Expressionismus: Sprachliche und thematische Quellen, Sprache und Literatur, 35 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1966), pp. 80-107.

<sup>46</sup>I am indebted to H. Szulanski for kindly allowing me to read his Brussels thesis; Leon Titcher, "Döblin and Dos Passos: Aspects of the City Novel," Modern Fiction Studies, 17, No. 1 (Spring 1971), 125-135; Volker Klotz, Die erzählte Stadt. Ein Sujet als Herausforderung des Romans von Lesage bis Döblin (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1969), pp. 317-371, 372-418, 469-472, et passim; Raymond John Banks, "Time and the Times: A Comparative Study of John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer and Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz," M.A. Queens 1971; Andrew M. McLean, "Joyce's Ulysses and Döblin's Alexanderplatz, Berlin," Comparative Literature, 25, No. 2 (Spring 1973), 97-113.



<sup>47</sup>Haskell M. Block, "The Concept of Influence in Comparative Literature," YCGL, 7 (1958), 30-37. On the subject of "influence" as a problematic concept, see Ihab H. Hassan, "The Problem of Influence in Literary History: Notes towards a Definition," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 14 (1955), 66-76; Claudio Guillén, "Literatura como Sistema," Filologia Romanza, 4 (1957), 1-29, and "The Aesthetics of Influence Studies in Comparative Literature," in Comparative Literature, Proceedings of the Second Congress of the I.C.L.A., ed. Werner P. Friedrich (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), I, 175-192; Joseph T. Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literary Studies," in Stallknecht and Frenz, pp. 58-71; Anna Balakian, "Influence and Literary Fortune," YCGL, 11 (1962), 24-31; A. O. Aldridge, A. Balakian, C. Guillén, and W. Fleischmann, "A Symposium: The Concept of Influence in Comparative Literature Studies," Comparative Literature Studies, Special Advance Issue (1963), 143-152.

<sup>48</sup>Martini, "Alfred Döblin," Deutsche Dichter, p. 329; Günther Anders, "Der verwüstete Mensch. Über Welt-und Sprachlosigkeit in Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Festschrift zum achtzigsten Geburtstag von Georg Lucács, ed. Frank Benseler (Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1965), p. 429; Astre, I, 175; Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin," p. 149, and "Döblin und die Weltliterature," pp. 305-309, 310-317.

<sup>49</sup>Jens, pp. 25, 42-45, 46-49, Beach, pp. 436-448, 502-502, 512-515, et passim.

<sup>50</sup>Klotz, pp. 317-371, 372-418, 469-472, et passim; Claude Gandelman, "Les Techniques de la provocation chez quelques nouvellistes et romanciers de l'entre-deux-guerres: Kafka, Joyce, Peret, Dos Passos, Döblin, Celine, Miller," Diss. 3<sup>e</sup> cycle Sorbonne Nouvelle 1972; Michel Zérafra, Personne et personnage; le romanesque des années 1920 aux années 1950 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969), Roman et société, Collection "Le Sociologue," 22 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), and "Le Roman et sa problématique de 1909 à 1915," 646-648.

<sup>51</sup>See, for example, Herschel Brickell, "Review of Manhattan Transfer," Literary Review, 6 (28 Nov. 1925), 5; Georg Meyer, "Amerikanische Tragödie. Theodore Dreiser. Upton Sinclair. John Dos Passos," Hamburger Fremdenblatt, 3 Dec. 1927, n. pag.; Herbert Ihering, "Döblins Heimkehr: Berlin Alexanderplatz," Berlin Börsen-Courier, No. 591 (1929), n. pag.; Wilhelm Michel, "Döblin, Alfred: Berlin Alexanderplatz," Die schöne Literatur, 31, No. 4 (April 1930), 182; Axel Eggebrecht, "Zu Döblins Erfolg," 210.

<sup>52</sup>Dos Passos, The Fourteenth Chronicle: Letters and Diaries of John Dos Passos, ed. Townsend Ludington (Boston: Gambit, 1973), p. 522.

<sup>53</sup>Dos Passos, "U.S.A.," in U.S.A., 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. vi; Ernest Hemingway, ed., "Introduction," in Men at War: The West War Stories of All Time (New York: Crown, 1942), p. xv.





<sup>54</sup>Minder, "Begegnungen mit Alfred Döblin in Frankreich," 58; Heinrich Straumann, "Last Meeting with Joyce," trans. Eugene and Maria Jolas, in A James Joyce Yearbook, ed. M. Jolas (Paris: Transition, 1949), p. 114; Friedman, p. 251.

<sup>55</sup>See Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin," pp. 137-138, for the most recent contribution to establishing the probable date of Döblin's reading of Ulysses. See also Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin," 184, for original reference to the Brecht connection, and Bertolt Brecht, "Über alte und neue Kunst 1920 bis 1933," in Schriften zur Literatur und Kunst I, Gesammelte Werke, ed. Elisabeth Hauptmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967), XVIII, 65. Döblin's South Sea island preference is expressed in a letter to Friedrich Kroner, editor-in-chief of Uhu. See Döblin, Briefe, p. 150, and "Mein Bücherkoffer für eine Südseefahrt. Umfrage," Uhu, 6, No. 6 (1930), 89.

<sup>56</sup>Döblin, "Ulysses von Joyce," in Aufsätze, pp. 287-290. Neither Henri Szulanski nor Helmut Becker demonstrates any knowledge of the review's existence. Francis Lide and Breon Mitchell draw upon the evidence of the review in a limited way. Lide, for example, recognizes that Döblin considered Ulysses a new departure in the arts appropriate to the realities of modern life and mentions the German writer's praise for the scientific attitude pervading parts of it. His emphasis, however, falls on a narrower interpretation of Döblin's comments on the novel's demonstration of the impossibility of a present-day Homer. In Lide's opinion, this consideration is related to Döblin's perception of the mock-heroic character of Joyce's Homeric parallels, an understanding which had consequences for his own work's mock-heroic aspects (Lide, pp. 183-184). Mitchell stresses the review's accent on stylistic innovation ("Joyce and Döblin," 175). Recent studies of Döblin's theoretical development only briefly acknowledge the review. As an example of what Döblin understood as successful, well-executed composition, his observations on Ulysses' comic, encyclopedic, and three-dimensional aspects are noted by Wolfgang Grothe, "Die Theorie des Erzählens bei Alfred Döblin," Text und Kritik, No. 13/14 (June 1966), 15. Žmegač, p. 300, includes a short reference to Döblin's admiration for the stylistic traits and devices which coincided with his own interest in narrative optics and simultaneity. The interpretation most closely approximating my own is provided by Monique Weyembergh-Broussart. She notes Döblin's appreciation of Joyce's picture of modern life and his understanding of the changed situation of the individual. She further claims that Döblin especially valued the fact that Joyce had drawn consequences from this understanding for the style and structure of his novel and the nature and method of modern writing. Duytschaever seconds her interpretation by remarking on Döblin's response to the radical form of Joyce's comprehensive Schriftwerk and the special praise for its inclusion of the modern picture of experience and anti-heroic tendency. See Weyembergh-Broussart, Alfred Döblin. Seine Religiosität in Persönlichkeit und Werk, Abhandlungen zur Kunst- Musik - und Literaturwissenschaft, 76 (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1970), p. 129 n. 65; Duytschaever, "Joyce--Dos Passos--Döblin," p. 138; "Döblin und die Weltliterature," pp. 182-183.





<sup>57</sup>See, for example, Iwan Goll, "Der Homer unserer Zeit," Die literarische Welt, 3, No. 24 (17 June 1927), 1.

<sup>58</sup>See T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," Dial, 75 (Nov. 1923), 480-483; Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form: Essays in Film Theory, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (London: Dennis Dobson, 1951), p. 104.

<sup>59</sup>See Erich Auerbach, Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard Trask (1953; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 463-488; Arnold Hauser, "The Film Age," in Naturalism, Impressionism. The Film Age, Vol. IV of The Social History of Art, trans. A. Hauser and Stanley Goodman, 2nd ed. (1951; rpt; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 226-233; Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 3-62; Ivring Howe, "The Idea of the Modern," Literary Modernism, ed. I. Howe (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967), p. 34.

<sup>60</sup>Howe, p. 12. For a survey of some of the diverse attempts to define Modernism, see Monroe K. Spears, "The Modern and the Past," in Dionysus and the City: Modernism in Twentieth-Century Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 3-34.

<sup>61</sup>See, for example, Renato Pogglioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1968), pp. 2-5, 130-147, 216-220; Peter Egri, Avantgardism and Modernity: A Comparison of James Joyce's "Ulysses" with Thomas Mann's "Der Zauberberg" and "Lotte in Weimar", trans. H. Frew Waidner III, University of Tulsa Monographs (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1972), p. 18 n. 8 et passim; Stephen Spender, "Moderns and Contemporaries," in The Struggle of the Modern (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), pp. 71-73; Georg Lukács, The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, trans. John and Necke Mander, 2nd ed. (London: Merlin Press, 1969), p. 13; Miklós Szabolcsi, "Avant-garde, Neo-avant-garde, Modernism. Questions and Suggestions," New Literary History, 3, No. 1 (Autumn 1971), 50-70, especially 50-53; Adrian Marino, "Modernisme et modernité, quelques précisions sémantiques," Neohelicon, 2, Nos. 3-4 (1974), 307-318; Jost Hermand, "The 'Good New' and the 'Bad New': Metamorphosis of the Modernism Debate in the GDR since 1956," New German Critique, 1, No. 3 (Fall 1974), 73.

<sup>62</sup>In this sense the present discussion draws upon the work of Ernst Fischer, Von der Notwendigkeit der Kunst, Claassen Cargo (1959; rpt. Hamburg: Claassen, 1967), pp. 56-127, and "Entfremdung, Dekadenz, Realismus," Sinn und Form, 14, Nos. 5/6 (1962), 816-854 as well as that of Lukács, Howe, Spender, and Hauser.

<sup>63</sup>Spender, "The Modern as Vision of the Whole," p. 83.

<sup>64</sup>Hauser, p. 221.

<sup>65</sup>For somewhat different criticism and extension of Szabolcsi's





use of terminology, see Ždenko Škreb, "Valeur scientifique du terme 'Avant-garde' en littérature," Neohelicon, 2, Nos. 3-4 (1974), 298-306, especially 302-303.

<sup>66</sup>For a similar assessment from a different perspective in a discussion which closely corresponds with Irving Howe's more thoughtful essay, "The Idea of the Modern," see Maurice Beebe, "Ulysses and the Age of Modernism," James Joyce Quarterly, 10, No. 1 (Fall 1972), 176-187.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Lillian S. Robinson and Lise Vogel, "Modernism and History," New Literary History, 3, No. 1 (Autumn 1971), 177.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Dos Passos, Best Times, pp. 36, 148; Döblin, Briefe, pp. 100-101; [Geist und Geld], Vossische Zeitung (27 March 1921), rpt. in Döblin, Die Vertreibung der Gespenster. Autobiographische Schriften. Betrachtungen zur Zeit. Aufsätze zu Kunst und Literatur, ed. Manfred Beyer (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1968), p. 77; "Arzt und Dichter," Die literarische Welt, 3, No. 43 (28 Oct. 1927), rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 361-367; "Stille Bewohner des Rollschrankes," Berliner Tageblatt, 19 June 1927, rpt. in Döblin, Die Zeitlupe. Kleine Prosa, ed. W. Muschg (Olten: Walter, 1962), pp. 117-119; "Erster Rückblick," p. 31; "Döblin über Döblin," ("Zwei Seelen in einer Brust"), Berliner Volks-Zeitung, 8 April 1928, rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 359-361; "Epilog," in Aufsätze, pp. 384-385; see also Louis Huguet, "Alfred Döblin. Éléments de biographie suivis d'annexes documentaires inédites et d'une bibliographie systématique," Diss. 3<sup>e</sup> cycle Paris-Nanterre 1968, I; Prangel, pp. 11-16.

<sup>3</sup>Döblin. "Mit dem Blick zur Latinität," Deutsch-französische Rundschau, 3, No. 5 (1930), III, rpt. in Aufsätze, p. 368.

<sup>4</sup>For a concise summation of the dynamic Bürgertum-Bildung interrelationship, see George Lichtheim, Lukács, Fontana Modern Masters (London: Fontana/Collins, 1970), pp. 85-87.

<sup>5</sup>See Döblin, "Wider die abgelebte Simultanschule," Die Weltbühne, 23, No. 21 (24 May 1927), 819-824; "Lektüre in alten Schulbüchern," Pariser Tageszeitung, 1, No. 115 (4 Oct. 1936), rpt. in Döblin, Schriften zur Politik und Gesellschaft, ed. Heinz Graber (Olten: Walter, 1972), pp. 338-343; Graber, ed., "Anmerkungen," Schriften, pp. 506-507; Döblin, "Goethe und Dostojewski. Im 100. Jahr nach Dostojewskis Geburt," Ganymed, 3 (1921), 82-93; "Erlebnis zweier Kräfte," Der Feuerreiter, 2, No. 1 (Dec. 1922), 1-4.

<sup>6</sup>Trust, "Glossen," Das Theater, 1, No. 2 (Sept. 1909), 42; "Deutsches und Jüdisches Theater," Prager Tagblatt, 46, No. 303 (28 Dec. 1921), 2-3; "Alte Theater-Neuigkeiten," Leipziger Tageblatt, 118





(21 Dec. 1924), rpt. in Die Vertreibung, p. 372; "Over Gerhart Hauptmann. De Mythos der Literatuur," De Hollandsche Revue, 37 (1931), 846. "The Germans would like to have their myths once again and when they can find no mythic figures, then they develop them in their own thoughts. The mythos of science is Einstein, the mythos of technology Oskar von Miller, and the mythos of literature Hauptmann."

<sup>7</sup>Döblin, "Gabriel Schillings Flucht an die Oeffentlichkeit," Der Sturm, 3, Nos. 134/135 (Nov. 1912), 207; "Gerhart Hauptmann und Ibsen," Prager Tagblatt, 46, No. 294 (16 Dec. 1921), 4-5; "Zwischen Kälte und Nächstenliebe," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 29 (2 Feb. 1922), 3; "Starke Schauspieler, dünne Stücke," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 202 (13 Sept. 1922), 3; "Die Legende eines Lebens und Anderes," Prager Tagblatt, 48, No. 23 (30 Jan. 1923), 2; Briefe, p. 120; "Over Gerhart Hauptmann," 846-847.

<sup>8</sup>Döblin, "Konzerte," Der Sturm, 1, No. 39 (24 Nov. 1910), 312; "Bemerkungen eines musikalischen Laien," Melos, 1, No. 4 (1 April 1920), 95-96; "Strandkinder," Das Theatre, 1, No. 9 (Jan. 1910), 202; "Der Rosenkavalier. Eine Vorbemerkung," Der Sturm, 1, No. 53 (4 March 1911), 422; "Glossen. Menagerie Richard Strauss," Der Sturm, 1, No. 3 (17 March 1910), 22; "Zwei Liederabende," Der Sturm, 2, No. 57 (1 April 1911), 455; "Nutzen der Musik für Literatur," Die Musikpflege, 1, No. 2 (1930), rpt. in Die Vertreibung, p. 396; Linke Poot, "Der Knabe bläst ins Wunderhorn," Die Neue Rundschau, 31 (June 1920), II, rpt. in Schriften, p. 148; Huguet, "L'Oeuvre d'Alfred Döblin," I, 87.

<sup>9</sup>Linke Poot, "Der Knabe bläst," in Schriften, p. 148; Döblin, "Arnold Schönberg," Der Sturm, 3, No. 132 (Oct. 1912), 187; "Die Bilder der Futuristen," Der Sturm, 3, No. 110 (May 1912), 41-42.

<sup>10</sup>See Herwarth Walden, "Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon. Vorrede," Der Sturm, 4, Nos. 180/181 (Oct. 1913) 106-107; Walden, "Einblick in Kunst," Der Sturm, 6, Nos. 21/22 (Feb. 1916), 122-124; Walden, "Das Begriffliche in der Dichtung," Der Sturm, 9, No. 5 (Aug. 1918), 66-67; Walden, Einblick in Kunst. Expressionismus. Futurismus. Kubismus, 10th ed. (Berlin: Der Sturm, 1924); Nell Walden and Lothar Schreyer, eds., Der Sturm. Ein Erinnerungsbuch an Herwarth Walden und die Künstler aus dem Sturmkreis (Baden-Baden: Woldemar Klein, 1954); Werner Rittich, "Kunsttheorie, Wortkunsttheorie und lyrische Wortkunst im Sturm," Diss. Griefswald 1933; Richard Brinkmann, "'Abstrakte' Lyrik im Expressionismus und die Möglichkeit symbolischer Aussage," in Der deutsche Expressionismus: Formen und Gestalten, ed. Hans Steffen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), pp. 88-114; Brinkmann, "Zur Wortkunst des Sturm-Kreises," in Unterscheidung und Bewahrung. Festschrift für Hermann Kunisch zum 60. Geburtstag (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1961), pp. 63-78.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Döblin, "Die Selbstherrlichkeit des Wortes," Melos, 1, No. 10 (1 July 1920), 227-229; "Mythisches, Amüsantes," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 75 (30 March 1922), 3; "Kubismus auf der Bühne,"



Prager Tagblatt, 48, No. 1 (23 Jan. 1923), 3; "Nutzen der Musik für die Literatur," pp. 395-397; "An Emil Faktor und Herbert Ihering (Dec. 1927)," in Briefe, p. 134.

<sup>12</sup>Döblin, "Ferien in Frankreich," Die Weltbühne, No. 42 (19 Oct. 1926), II, 614-619; "Mit dem Blick zur Latinität," pp. 367-371; Die deutsche Literatur, pp. 25-26. For consideration of Döblin's inclination toward French literature, see Duytschaever, "Döblin und die Weltliteratur," pp. 55-56.

<sup>13</sup>Döblin, "Mit dem Blick zur Latinität," p. 368; "An Thomas Mann (20 Aug. 1943)," in Briefe, p. 293.

<sup>14</sup>Döblin, "Krise des Romans?," in Die Vertreibung, p. 376. Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin, p. 452, has suggested 1928 as an approximate date for the undated questionnaire response.

<sup>15</sup>Döblin, "Mehrfaches Kopfschütteln," Die Literatur, 26, No. 1, (Oct. 1923), 6.

<sup>16</sup>John Dos Passos, "Against American Literature," New Republic, 8, No. 102 (14 Oct. 1916), 269.

<sup>17</sup>Dos Passos, Rosinante to the Road Again (New York: George H. Doran, 1922), pp. 100, 175; "Baroja Muzzled," rev. of The Quest (La busca), by Pío Baroja, trans. Isaac Goldberg, Dial, 74 (Feb. 1923), 200; "Young Spain," Seven Arts, 2 (Aug. 1917), 482-483.

<sup>18</sup>Dos Passos, "Off the Shoals," rev. of The Enormous Room, by E. E. Cummings, Dial, 73 (July 1922), 98.

<sup>19</sup>Dos Passos, "Foreword," in John Howard Lawson, Roger Bloomer. A Play in Three Acts (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923), p. viii.

<sup>20</sup>Dos Passos, "Off the Shoals," 97; Trust, "Glossen," 42; Dos Passos, The Theme is Freedom (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1956), pp. 41-42; "Translator's Foreword," in Blaise Cendrars, Panama or the Adventures of My Seven Uncles (New York: Harper, 1931), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>21</sup>Dos Passos, "Homer of the Transsiberian," Saturday Review of Literature, 3, No. 12 (16 Oct. 1926), 222.

<sup>22</sup>Huguet, "L'Oeuvre d'Alfred Döblin," I, 202. Döblin's response to Marinetti's Manifeste technique de la littérature futuriste and the Supplément au Manifeste as expressed in his "open letter" to Marinetti receives some attention from Arnold, Die Literature des Expressionismus, pp. 82-83; Noëmi Blumenkranz-Onimus, "Introduction à Alfred Döblin, 'La Technique du mot futuriste' (1912)," trans. E. Dickenherr and N. Blumenkranz-Onimus, L'année 1913. Les formes esthétiques de l'oeuvre d'art à la veille de la première guerre mondiale, ed. Liliane Brion-Guerry, Collection D'Esthétique, 17 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973), III, 386. For Döblin's subsequent reactions to the





teatro sintetico futurista, see Linke Poot, "Himmlisches und irdisches Theater," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Dec. 1919), II, rpt. in Döblin, Der deutsche Maskenball von Linke Poot. Wissen und Verändern, ed. Heinz Graber (Olten: Walter, 1972), p. 60.

<sup>23</sup>Döblin, "Die Romane von Franz Kafka," Die literarische Welt, 3, No. 9 (4 March 1927), rpt. in Aufsätze, p. 286; "Unbekannte junge Erzähler. Das votum Alfred Döblin zum 'Geschenk der Jugend'. Chance 1," Die literarische Welt, 3, No. 11 (18 March 1927), 1.

<sup>24</sup>T. S. Eliot, 483; Egri, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup>For diverse approaches to a fundamental consistency in the evolution of Dos Passos and Döblin, see, for example, Donnell, "Dos Passos: Satirical Historian"; David Sanders, "The Anarchism of John Dos Passos," South Atlantic Quarterly, 60, No. 1 (Winter 1961), 44-55; Weyembergh-Broussart, Döblin: Seine Religiosität; Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin; Landsberg, p. 143.

<sup>26</sup>"Gruppe VI: Autobiographisches," Nachlass Alfred Döblins, Depositum in Schiller-Nationalmuseum in Marbach a. N., quoted in Beyer "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 414.

<sup>27</sup>Compare, for example, Döblin's 1948 "Epilog" (391) and 1955 "Nachwort" (BA, p. 508) interpretations of the theme of Alexanderplatz as "sacrifice" with a ca. 1928 explanation of his current project's concern with the social problem of a man between classes in his "Zukunftspläne," in Die Vertreibung, p. 97. Compare also the articles and essays which appear in abridged form, complete with Dos Passos' later interpolations, in The Theme is Freedom with their original uncut versions in periodical publications and in Rosinante to the Road Again. See also Orient Express (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1927); In All Countries (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934); Journeys Between Wars (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938).

<sup>28</sup>Dos Passos, "Humble Protest," Harvard Monthly, 62 (June 1916), 115-20.

<sup>29</sup>See Malcolm Cowley, "John Dos Passos: The Poet and the World," New Republic, 70 (27 Apr. 1932) and 88 (9 Sept. 1936), rpt. in Andrew Hook, ed., Dos Passos: A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 76-86; Landsberg, pp. 33-35.

<sup>30</sup>See "Summer Military Camps: Two Views. I," Harvard Monthly, 60 (July 1915), 156; Dos Passos, "The Evangelist and the Volcano," Harvard Monthly, 61 (Nov. 1915), 61; "The World Decision," 62 (March 1916), 23-24; "Book Review," rev. of The Catholic Anthology and Georgian Poetry, 1913-1915, 62 (May 1916), 93; "A Conference on Foreign Relations," 62 (June 1916), 126-127.





<sup>31</sup>Quoted in Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 414.

<sup>32</sup>See Döblin, Briefe, pp. 61-103; "Es ist Zeit!," Die neue Rundschau, 28, No. 8 (Aug. 1917), II, rpt. in Schriften, pp. 27-28; Prangel, pp. 33-34; Dos Passos, Best Times, pp. 53-93; Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 85-198.

<sup>33</sup>See Landsberg, pp. 34-43.

<sup>34</sup>See Döblin, "Reims," Die neue Rundschau, 25, (Dec. 1914), II, rpt. in Schriften, pp. 17-24; "Drei Demokraten," Die neue Rundschau, 29 (Feb. 1918), I, rpt. in Schriften, pp. 33-44.

<sup>35</sup>Dos Passos, Letters to Arthur M. McComb, 1916-1918, in the Library of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.

<sup>36</sup>Döblin, "Die Vertreibung der Gespenster," Der neue Merkur, Sonderheft "Der Vorläufer," 3, No. 3 (Jan. 1919), rpt. in Schriften, pp. 73-75; Linke Poot, "Der Bär wider Willen," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Aug. 1919), II, rpt. in Schriften, pp. 103-104.

<sup>37</sup>Döblin, Das Ich über der Natur (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1928), p. 240; Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 414-415, interprets these as the questions which occupied all humanistic German writers since the turn of the century and, within a different historical context, since the Russian October Revolution. It goes without saying that such questions reflect the concerns of numerous non-German writers of the period as well.

<sup>38</sup>Dos Passos, One Man's Initiation: 1917, auth. ed., complete and unexpurgated (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 168.

<sup>39</sup>See Döblin, "Die Vertreibung," rpt. in Schriften, p. 73; "Dämmerung," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Nov. 1919), II, rpt. in Schriften, p. 123; Linke Poot, "Zwischen Helm und Zylinder," Die neue Rundschau, 31 (Aug. 1920), rpt. in Schriften, p. 180.

<sup>40</sup>Dos Passos, "In Portugal," Liberator, 3 (April 1920), 25. For Dos Passos' own versions of his first impressions of Portugal, see Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 263-264; Best Times, p. 96.

<sup>41</sup>Dos Passos, "The Caucasus Under the Soviets," Liberator, 5 (Aug. 1922) and "In a New Republic," Freeman, 4 (5 Oct. 1921), rpt. as "Red Caucasus," in Journeys, pp. 94-95.

<sup>42</sup>Dos Passos, "Building Lots," rev. of Weeds [Mala hierba] by Pío Baroja, trans. Isaac Goldberg, Nation, 118, No. 3053 (9 Jan. 1924), 36.



<sup>43</sup>Dos Passos, Liberator, 3 (Oct. 1920), 28-30; Freeman, 4 (1 Feb. 1922), 491-493 and 4 (8 Feb. 1922), 517-518.

<sup>44</sup>Leon Trotsky, quoted in A. J. Ryder, The German Revolution of 1819: A Study of German Socialism in War and Revolt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup>See Döblin, "Revolutionstage im Elsass," Die neue Rundschau, 20 (Feb. 1919), I, rpt. in Schriften, pp. 59-71.

<sup>46</sup>Writing from Paris (July 12, 1934) to Elvira and Arthur Rosin in New York, Döblin averred, "Glauben Sie mir, es ist nicht das Regime allein; die bürgerliche Masse ist selber kernfaul, dabei bedeckt mit äusserer Exaktheit." Briefe, p. 196.

<sup>47</sup>Too extensive for inclusion here, Döblin's periodical contributions of the period are listed in Louis Huguet, Bibliographie Alfred Döblin (Berlin: Aufbau, 1972), pp. 75-103.

<sup>48</sup>This, for example, is a problematic feature in Klaus Müller-Salget's exploration of Döblin's evolving Naturphilosophie as the major impetus for Alexanderplatz. His detailed and enlightening study provides only brief mention (pp. 249-252) of Döblin's important social and political interests in the early 1920s and treats those of the entire decade as manifestations of the evolving metaphysic. Manfred Beyer's valuable inquiry into the social-political impetus for Alexanderplatz is indispensable in shedding light on what most German scholarship has tended to ignore. Leo Kreutzer (see especially pp. 71-80) is less reluctant than either Müller-Salget or Beyer in pointing up the troublesome and contradictory aspects of Döblin's thinking in both areas and in recognizing their impact upon his fiction. Kreutzer represents that position closest to the one taken in the present study. See Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin; Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte"; Kreutzer.

<sup>49</sup>Ryder, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup>Döblin scholarship has in the main tended to accept as fact Döblin's membership in the SPD dating from 1921. Differing dates, however, are often presented for his departure from the party. See, for example, Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 399, for 1926; Graber, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Der deutsche Maskenball, p. 313, for 1928; Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin, p. 267, for 1929. Prangel, Alfred Döblin, p. 37, notes that there is no real proof of Döblin's official membership in either the USPD (1919-21) or the SPD (1921-27), however. Some of the practical assistance offered by Döblin during the turbulent postwar years in Berlin that brought him into contact with political activists and strikers is cited by Prangel, p. 36. Other activities engaged in during the alleged SPD membership are enumerated by Ernst Kreuder, "Alfred Döblin," Jahrbuch 1957 der Akademie der Wissenschaften und Literatur (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und







Literatur, 1957), p. 149. Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 399, suggests the strongest contributing factor for Döblin's disaffection with the SPD was the party's eventual capitulation after the obscenity laws prepared and presented by the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Külz, were passed by the Reichstag (Dec. 3, 1926). Döblin, who described himself as an active socialist, vaguely refers in the post-conversion period to a dislike for the political favoritism he saw dominating the left-wing parties during the 1920s. See Döblin, Schicksalsreise. Bericht und Bekenntnis (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht-Carolusdruckerei, 1949), p. 165.

<sup>51</sup>A detailed account of the "Gruppe 1925" development is provided by Kreutzer, pp. 136-140. A complete listing of Döblin's campaign in print against censorship and intellectual and artistic suppression in the Korrespondenznachrichten of the Aktionsgemeinschaft für Geistige Freiheit and in Die Stimme der Freiheit between 1928-29 appears in Huguet, Bibliographie, pp. 103-109. Outside Döblin scholarship, for references to his activities during the decade, see Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, Aktionen--Bekenntnisse--Perspektiven. Berichte und Dokumente vom Kampf um die Freiheit des literarischen Schaffens in der Weimarer Republik (Berlin: Aufbau, 1966).

<sup>52</sup>Döblin, "Schriftsteller und Politik," Zeitschrift des Schutzverbandes deutscher Schriftsteller, 2, No. 3 (May 1924), rpt. in Schriften, p. 234.

<sup>53</sup>See Döblin, "Die Vertreibung," Schriften, p. 72; "Kassenärzte und Kassenpatienten," Der Querschnitt, 9, Nos. 5-6 (May 1929), rpt. in Schriften, pp. 240-244; "Ich prüfe und befrage mich," 109; Kreutzer, pp. 76-81; Graber, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Der deutsche Maskenball, pp. 314-17; Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 398-399.

<sup>54</sup>See Kreutzer, p. 140, for the relationship of the dispute to the genesis of Wissen und Verändern! Offene Briefe an einen jungen Menschen (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1931).

<sup>55</sup>See Döblin, "Die Vertreibung," in Schriften, p. 72; Briefe, p. 476; Graber, ed., "Nachwort," in Der deutsche Maskenball, p. 311; Kreutzer, pp. 140, 143-145.

<sup>56</sup>See Paul Fechter, "Anmerkungen zu Alfred Döblins neuem Buch," Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (22 March 1931); Walter Benjamin, "Der Autor als Produzent," (1934), Versuche über Brecht, Edition Suhrkamp, 172 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966), pp. 102-104. For a complete listing of reviews, see Huguet, Bibliographie, pp. 327-330. Several are reproduced in Ingrid Schuster and Ingrid Bode, Alfred Döblin im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Kritik (Bern: Francke, 1973), pp. 267-294; Döblin's defense of his work is reprinted in Schriften, pp. 262-291.



<sup>57</sup>See Dos Passos, "Failure of Marxism," Life, 24 (19 Jan. 1948), 96-98. As Donnell, II, 565-566, accurately claims, in the late 1940s and 1950s Dos Passos tended to see that the diminution of individual liberties was one present in capitalist, socialist, and fascist countries as well.

<sup>58</sup>Landsberg, pp. 105, 150.

<sup>59</sup>Dos Passos, "Building Lots," 36-37.

<sup>60</sup>For varying interpretations of this development, one rarely elaborated upon in histories of the U.S., see Robert K. Murray, Red Scare. A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955); Julian F. Jaffe, Crusade Against Radicalism. New York During the Red Scare 1914-1924, National University Publications, Series in American Studies (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972); William Preston, Jr., Aliens and Dissenters. Federal Suppression of Radicals. 1903-1933 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963); Murray B. Levin, Political Hysteria in America: The Democratic Capacity for Repression (New York: Basic Books, 1971); Cedric Belfrage, "Part One: Foundations, 1900-45," in The American Inquisition 1945-60 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), pp. 9-14; Sidney Lens, The Labor Wars. From the Molly Maguires to the Sitdowns (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1973), pp. 187-236.

<sup>61</sup>Dos Passos, "America and the Pursuit of Happiness," Nation, 3, No. 2895 (29 Dec. 1920), 777-78.

<sup>62</sup>See Dos Passos, Best Times, pp. 97-101, 144-157; Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 69-75, 299-307, 350-356, 360; Landsberg, pp. 51-107.

<sup>63</sup>Dos Passos, "What Makes a Novelist," 31.

<sup>64</sup>See Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," Vanity Fair, 24 (May 1925), 64; On the possible influence of Durkheim, Romains, and the "mystical monism" of Waldo Frank, see Donnell, I, 130-131, and II, 833-835 n. 29.

<sup>65</sup>Döblin, "Berlin und die Künstler," Vossische Zeitung, No. 180 (16 April 1922), rpt. in Zeitlupe, p. 59; "Das märkische Nineve," Der Sturm, 1, No. 2 (10 March 1910), 13; Linke Poot, "Östlich um den Alexanderplatz," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 458 (29 Sept. 1923), Evening Edition, 2; Linke Poot, "Vorstoß nach dem Westen," Berliner Tageblatt, 53, No. 101 (28 Feb. 1924), Evening Edition, 2.

<sup>66</sup>Döblin, "Geleitwort," in Mario von Bucovich, Berlin, "Das Gesicht der Städte," (Berlin: Albertus, 1928), p. vii.

<sup>67</sup>Döblin, "Von Geschichten, Bildern und ihrer Wahrheit," in August Sander, Antlitz der Zeit. Sechzig Aufnahmen deutscher Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Transmare, 1929), p. 15.





<sup>68</sup>See Linke Poot, "An die Geistlichkeit," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Oct. 1919), II, rpt. in Der deutsche Maskenball, p. 48; Döblin, "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters," Die neue Rundschau, 35 (Dec. 1924), II, rpt. in Aufsätze, p. 77.

<sup>69</sup>Döblin, "Bermerkungen zu Berge Meere und Giganten," Die neue Rundschau, 35 (June 1924), I, rpt. in Aufsätze, p. 348.

<sup>70</sup>Dos Passos, "The American Theatre: 1930-31. Is the Whole Show on the Skids," New Republic, 66 (1 April 1931), 171-175; "Sur l'inquiétude contemporaine," Cahiers de l'Etoile, 4, No. 18 (Nov.-Dec. 1930), 845-1040. Dos Passos' and Döblin's responses to the questions (845) appear respectively, 878-879 and 1096-1097.

<sup>71</sup>See Döblin, "Der Schatten ohne Esel," Prager Tagblatt, 48, No. 60 (14 March 1923), 2. Among the periodical literature which either develops or refers in some way to the evolving naturism, see "Bekenntnis zum Naturalismus," Das Tagebuch, 1, No. 50 (24 Dec. 1920), II, 1599-1601; "Buddho und die Natur," Die neue Rundschau, 32 (1921), II, 1192-1200; "Das Wasser," Die neue Rundschau, 22 (1922), II, 853-858; "Die Natur und ihre Seelen," Der neue Merkur, 6, No. 1 (April 1922), 5-14; "Von lebendigen Pflanzen," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 495 (21 Oct. 1923), 5-6; "Die abscheuliche Relativitätstheorie," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 543 (24 Nov. 1923), 3; "Naturkenntnis, nicht Naturwissenschaft," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 575 (13 Dec. 1923); "Blick auf die Naturwissenschaft," Die neue Rundschau, 34 (1923), II, 1132-1138; "Die Natur und das Kunstwerk," Berliner Tageblatt, 53, No. 289 (13 June 1924); "Aussenseiter der Naturwissenschaft," Vossische Zeitung, No. 306 (31 Dec. 1927), 1.

<sup>72</sup>Döblin and others, "Wie kamen Sie zu Ihrem Pseudonym?," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 29, No. 574 (9 Dec. 1926), 2.

<sup>73</sup>Walter Muschg, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Döblin, Unser Dasein (Olten: Walter, 1964), pp. 481-482.

<sup>74</sup>Kreutzer, p. 82.

<sup>75</sup>For discussion of this vitalism in the early writings, see Ribbat, pp. 10-87.

<sup>76</sup>See Döblin, Reise in Polen (Olten: Walter, 1968). Döblin's interest in the main currents of European Jewish experience during the 1920s has received some attention from Prangel, Alfred Döblin, pp. 53-54, and Weyembergh-Broussart, pp. 191-204. For consideration of the diverse influences on Döblin's naturism, see Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 412-413; Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin, pp. 232-265; Weyembergh-Broussart, pp. 74-212.

<sup>77</sup>Prangel, pp. 58-59.





## CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 64.

<sup>2</sup>Except for the terminological distinctions I have outlined earlier (Chapter II, pp. 61-62), my present discussion draws upon the major features of the Apollinairean tendency outlined by Szabolcsi, 51-53.

<sup>3</sup>See Döblin, "Schriftstellerei und Dichtung," in Aufsätze, p. 95; Unser Dasein, pp. 262-263; "Regie in Berlin," Prager Tagblatt, 46, No. 275 (24 Nov. 1921), 3; "Toller: Die Maschinenstürmer," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 153 (4 July 1922), 3; "Die beiden Capeks," Prager Tagblatt, 48, No. 43 (22 Feb. 1923), 5; "Kolumbus," Prager Tagblatt, 49, No. 52 (1 March 1924), 3; "Kunst ist nicht frei, sondern wirksam: ars militans," Jahrbuch der Preussischen Akademie der Künste, Sektion für Dichtkunst, 1 (1929), rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 98-100.

<sup>4</sup>Döblin, "Staat und Schriftsteller (7 May 1921)," rpt. in Aufsätze, p. 52; "Kunst, Dämon und Gemeinschaft," Das Kunstblatt, 10, No. 5 (1926), rpt. in Zeitlupe, p. 93. For Döblin's subsequent reflections on the topic, see Die deutsche Literatur, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Döblin, "Die repräsentative und die aktive Akademie," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 60, No. 603 (25 Dec. 1927), rpt. in Die Vertreibung, p. 388. See also his "Kunst ist nicht frei," pp. 97-103.

<sup>6</sup>This is one of the drawbacks, for example, in Blanche Gelfant's pioneering study when a Jeffersonian connection is ascribed to works predating Dos Passos' post-1937 study of Jeffersonian thought, and when Manhattan Transfer is described in terms of the mature poetic achievement with U.S.A. See Gelfant, "The Synoptic Novel," The American City Novel (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), pp. 137-138. Landsberg's political biography, which is careful in its chronology, serves as a more accurate gauge of intellectual and artistic influences.

<sup>7</sup>Dos Passos, "Towards a Revolutionary Theatre," New Masses, 3, No. 8 (Dec. 1927), 20.

<sup>8</sup>Dos Passos, "Statement of Belief," Bookman, 68 (Sept. 1928), 26; "The Making of a Writer," rev. of 120 Million, by Michael Gold, New Masses, 4, No. 10 (March 1929), 23; "The Writer as Technician," American Writers' Congress, First American Writers' Congress, ed. Henry Hart (New York: International Publishers, 1935), pp. 79, 81. For some background on the paper, which was submitted by mail and arrived too late to be read at the New York Congress, see Dos Passos, "To Edmund Wilson (March 27, 1935)" and "To Robert Cantwell (May 1935)," Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 468, 476. On Dos Passos' evident disaccord with the Communist Party and its political and literary programs, see Dos Passos, "Whither the American Writer?," Modern Quarterly, 6 (Summer 1932), 11-12; Landsberg, pp. 163-175.



<sup>9</sup>Dos Passos, "Baroja Muzzled," 199. The correspondence between Dos Passos' own attitudes and his assessment of Baroja is acknowledged by John H. Wrenn, John Dos Passos, Twayne's United States Authors' Series, 9 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1961), pp. 91-92. Wrenn's reference to a similar acknowledgment from Edmund Wilson, however, is without any factual basis. Neither the 1944 New Yorker review cited by Wrenn (p. 194 n. 7) nor any of Wilson's Dos Passos commentary poses the problem of the correspondence between the statements about Baroja and Dos Passos' own art. For consideration of the Baroja-Dos Passos relationship in terms of thematic similarities between the Basque's portrait of Madrid and the American's picture of New York, see Walter Borenstein, "The Failure of Nerve. The Impact of Pío Baroja's Spain on John Dos Passos," in Nine Essays in Modern Literature, ed., Donald E. Stafford (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 63-87.

<sup>10</sup>Landsberg, pp. 101-102.

<sup>11</sup>Döblin, "Literatur und Rundfunk (30 Sept. 1929)," in Hans Bredow, ed., Aus meinem Archiv. Probleme des Rundfunks (Heidelberg: Kurt Winckel, 1950), p. 314.

<sup>12</sup>See Linke Poot, "Der Knabe bläst ins Wunderhorn," in Schriften, pp. 143-144; Döblin, (Beitrag zu) Arno Holz und sein Werk. Deutsche Stimmen zu seinem 60. Geburtstag, ed. Ferdinand Avenarius, Max Liebermann and Max von Schillings (Berlin: Werk-Verlag, 1923), p. 33; "Von alten zum neuen Nationalismus. Akademie-Rede über Arno Holz," Das Tagebuch, 11, No. 3 (18 Jan. 1930), rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 138-145.

<sup>13</sup>See Döblin, "Anweisung," Die Ehe. Drei Szenen und ein Vorspiel (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1931), p. 10.

<sup>14</sup>Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 64.

<sup>15</sup>See Dos Passos, Rosinante, pp. 182-195; "The Misadventures of Deburau," Freeman, 2 (2 Feb. 1912), 498; "Foreword," in Roger Bloomer, p. vi; Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 301, 304.

<sup>16</sup>Dos Passos, "The Making of a Writer," 23.

<sup>17</sup>Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 64; Döblin, "Griffe ins Leben," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 301 (11 April 1923), 10.

<sup>18</sup>Döblin, "Griffe ins Leben," 10. See also Döblin, "Die Nibelungen und Hinkemann," Prager Tagblatt, 49, No. 103 (1 May 1924), 6; "Literatur und Rundfunk," p. 314.

<sup>19</sup>In this connection, see Lowry, "The Lively Art of Manhattan Transfer," PMLA, 84 (1969), 1628-1638; Muschg, "Zwei Romane Alfred Döblins," pp. 219-243.







<sup>20</sup>Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 64; Trust, "Metropolerinnerung," Das Theater, 1, No. 3 (Oct. 1909), 60. Döblin, "Das Theater der kleinen Leute," Das Theater, 1, No. 8 (Dec. 1909), 191-192; Linke Poot, "Dionysos," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Jul. 1919), II, rpt. in Der deutsche Maskenball, pp. 25-27; Linke Poot, "Himmlisches und irdisches Theater," Die neue Rundschau, 30 (Dec. 1919), II, rpt. in Der deutsche Maskenball, p. 65; Linke Poot, "Die Moral der 'Schlager'," Berliner Tageblatt, 53, No. 73 (12 Feb. 1924), Evening Edition, 2; Seigfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film, 4th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 15-115.

<sup>21</sup>Dos Passos, The Garbage Man, in Three Plays (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934), pp. 66-70; "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 64; Döblin, "Der Segen des Radio," Weser Zeitung, 92, No. 337 (5 July 1925), Morning Edition, Supplement 1.

<sup>22</sup>See Döblin, "Literatur und Rundfunk," p. 314; "Das Hörspiel Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Prangel, Materialien, pp. 199-236; Heinz Schwitzke, Das Hörspiel. Dramaturgie und Geschichte (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1963), pp. 33-34, 76, 145-150, et passim.

<sup>23</sup>Dos Passos, "Satire as a Way of Seeing," in George Grosz, Interregnum (New York: Black Sun Press, 1936), p. 12.

<sup>24</sup>Dos Passos, "Is the 'Realistic' Theatre Obsolete?," 114; Döblin, "Europäische Krise, Gesang, Film," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 99 (28 April 1922), 3.

<sup>25</sup>Döblin, "Berliner Theater," Der Sturm, 1910, No. 36 (3 Nov. 1910), 287-288; "Pantomime und Die vier Toten der Fiametta von William Wauer und Herwarth Walden," Der Sturm, 1911, No. 67 (8 July 1911), 531-532; "Tänzerinnen," Der Sturm, 3, No. 129 (Oct. 1912), 162; Lydia und Mäxchen, in Die Gefährten, 3, No. 4 (1920), 12-28. For discussion of the play as a programmatic precursor of Expressionist drama and as theatrical parody, see Horst Denkler, Drama des Expressionismus. Programm. Spieltext. Theater (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1967), pp. 27-52, especially 38-42, and Joris Duytschaever, "Alfred Döblins Lydia und Mäxchen als Theaterparodie," in "Texte und Kontexte: Studien zur deutschen und vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft. Festschrift für Norbert Fierst zum 65. Geburtstag," ed. Manfred Durzak (Bern: Francke, 1973), pp. 49-57.

<sup>26</sup>See the following Prager Tagblatt reviews authored by Döblin: "Grossstreik in Berlin," 47, No. 38 (14 Feb. 1922), 1-2; "Robert Musil: Vinzenz," 48, No. 288 (11 Dec. 1923), 6-7; "Russisches Theater und Reinhardt," 46, No. 297 (20 Dec. 1921), 3; "Kreislers Eckfenster. Zur Überwindung des Dramas," 48, No. 83 (18 July 1923), 6; "Der halbentfesselte Tairoff," 48, No. 218 (19 Sept. 1923), 3; "Regisseur, Theaterstück, Schauspieler," 47, No. 296 (19 Dec. 1922), 3-4; "Eine neue Psychologie von Mann und Weib," 47, No. 305 (31 Dec. 1922), 9; "Kubismus



auf der Bühne," 48, No. 1 (8 Jan. 1923), 3; "Revolution oder Dekadenz?," 48, No. 92 (21 April 1923), 3; "Übertölpel und Tumultuanten," 48, No. 229 (2 Oct. 1923), 3.

<sup>27</sup>Döblin, "Kreislers Eckfenster," 6.

<sup>28</sup>Döblin, "Paquet: Fahnen," 3.

<sup>29</sup>Idem. See also Döblin, "Antikritisches," Der Sturm, 1910, No. 35 (7 Oct. 1910), 279-280; "Kreislers Eckfenster," 6; "Grossstreik in Berlin," 1-2; "Musil: Vinzenz," 6-7; "Der Schatten ohne Esel," 2; "Literatur und Rundfunk," p. 312.

<sup>30</sup>Döblin, "Europäische Krise," 3.

<sup>31</sup>Döblin, "Film. Deutsche Dichter über den Film," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 54, No. 43 (14 Sept. 1922), Morning Edition.

<sup>32</sup>Döblin, "Nur der veränderte Autor kann den Film verändern," Film-Kurier, 12, Special Issue (16 Aug. 1930).

<sup>33</sup>For critical reviews and discussions of the film, see Rudolf Arnheim, "Zwei Filme," Die Weltbühne, 27, No. 41 (13 Oct. 1931), 572-573; Herbert Ihering, "Der Alexanderplatz-Film," Berliner Börsen-Courier, 64 (9 Oct. 1931); Alfred Kantorowicz, "Der Film vom Franz Biberkopf," Die literarische Welt, 7, No. 42 (16 Oct. 1931), 7; Siegfried Kracauer, "Berlin Alexanderplatz als Film," Frankfurter Zeitung, 75, No. 761/62 (13 Oct. 1931), 3; Kracauer, "Literarische Filme," Die neue Rundschau, 43 (1931), II, 859-861, esp. 859-60; Hermann Sinsheimer, "Berlin Alexanderplatz. Capitol," Berliner Tageblatt, 60, No. 477 (9 Oct. 1931), Evening Edition, 2; Mordaunt Hall, "A German Language Film Version of Alfred Döblin's Novel Alexanderplatz," New York Times, 11 May 1933, rpt. in New York Times Film Reviews 1913-68, 6 vols. (New York: New York Times/Arno Press, 1970), II, 560; Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler, pp. 223-224.

<sup>34</sup>Paul Rotha, The Film Till Now. A Survey of World Cinema, 4th ed., rev. (London: Spring Books, 1967), p. 99.

<sup>35</sup>Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler, p. 96. For Döblin's own brief commentary between 1910-27 on the abortive "Komtesse Mizzi" play and its subsequent transformations, see Briefe, pp. 52, 101, and "Stille Bewohner des Rollschranke. Meine Werke, von denen niemand weiss," Berliner Tagblatt, 56, No. 286 (19 June 1927), rpt. in Zeitlupe, p. 119. The 37 pp. MS (with preliminary rough drafts) of Die geweihten Töchter. Film in fünf Akten forms part of Döblin's literary legacy deposited in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv im Schiller-Nationalmuseum in Marbach am Neckar. An abstract and partial reproduction appears as "Die geweihten Töchter, Film," Das Dreieck, 1, No. 1 (Sept. 1924), 22-24; a résumé and extract of the alternate version appear as "Aus dem Kuriositätenkabinett der Literarischen Welt. Szenen eines Filmmanuskripts. Von Alfred Doeblin," Die literarische Welt, 6, No. 39





(26 Sept. 1930), 4. Compare Die Nonnen von Kemnade. Schauspiel in vier Akten (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1923).

<sup>36</sup>Döblin, "Der Schatten ohne Esel," 2.

<sup>37</sup>For details about the problematic film studio employment during the difficult California exile and information concerning Döblin's contribution to Mrs. Miniver and Random Harvest, see Briefe, pp. 242-260, and Georg Fröschel, "Döblin in Hollywood," Die Zeit, No. 24 (15 June 1962), 14.

<sup>38</sup>On the interest in Griffith and in montage stimulated by Dos Passos' meeting with the Soviet filmmakers, see Dos Passos, Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 386; Best Times, pp. 199-200; Theme is Freedom, pp. 41-42, 66. For Eisenstein's filmography, see Jacques Charrière, ed., S. M. Eisenstein. Tous ses films--250 photogrammes (Paris: Société Nouvelle des Editions du Chêne, Editions de L'Avant-Scène Cinéma, 1972). Given the chronological evidence, G.-A. Astre's (I, 166) unqualified acceptance of Dos Passos' recollection of interest in Eisenstein-Griffith montage as a major influence on Manhattan Transfer is open to question. This does not, of course, rule out reference to montage or to its many analogues in considering the composition of the novel. Astre's claim for the "near certainty" that the novel was deeply inspired by Eisenstein's Proletcult experiments is less problematic (I, 170). However, Manhattan Transfer is directly related to Dos Passos' own attempt at theatrical reform, to the 1918-23 Moon is a Gong/Garbage Man and to the stimulus his interest received from his friendship with John Howard Lawson. The 1921 contact with "Proletcult" during his trip to the Caucasus (See Journeys Between Wars, p. 86) appears to have impressed Dos Passos far more for its involvement of participants and audience traditionally alienated from theatre than for any of its technical innovations.

<sup>39</sup>See Dos Passos, Best Times, p. 166; Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 336-337; Manhattan Transfer, 2nd Sentry Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953), p. 3; Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, Manhatta, available through the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Department of Film, Film Study Center; Lewis Jacobs, "Avant-Garde Production in America," Experiment in the Film, ed. Roger Manvell, The Literature of Cinema (1949; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1970), pp. 114-116. Richard Meran Barsam, Nonfiction Film: A Critical History (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1973), p. 19; Michel Sanouillet, Dada à Paris (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1965), pp. 381, 627.

<sup>40</sup>See Döblin, "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker," Aufsätze, pp. 15-19; "Bemerkungen zum Roman," Die neue Rundschau, 28 (1917), I, rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 19-23; "Über Roman und Prosa," Marsyas, 1, No. 3 (Nov./Dec. 1917), 213-218; Walter Muschg, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Aufsätze, p. 403; Erhardt, "Alfred Döblin's Roman-Theorie."





<sup>41</sup>For varying considerations of Döblin's novel commentary, see Walter Muschg, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Aufsätze, pp. 404-405; Viktor Žmegač, "Alfred Döblins Poetik des Romans," in Deutsche Romantheorien. Beiträge zu einer historischen Poetik des Romans in Deutschland, ed. Reinhold Grimm (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1968), pp. 297-320; Erhardt, 36; Ribbat, Die Wahrheit des Lebens, pp. 88-116, especially pp. 96-109, 114-116; Karl Herbert Blessing, Die Problematik des "modernen Epos" im Frühwerk Alfred Döblins, Deutsche Studien, 19 (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1972), p. 19; Bruno Hillebrand, "Alfred Döblin," in Theorie des Romans (Munich: Winkler, 1972), II, 179-192; Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin, pp. 265-285, especially pp. 275-285.

<sup>42</sup>See pp. 75-81 above.

<sup>43</sup>See, for example, Dos Passos, "Book Reviews," rev. of The War in Eastern Europe, by John Reed, Harvard Monthly, 62 (July 1916), 149; Döblin, "Paquet: Fahnen,"; Denkler, Drama des Expressionismus, p. 39.

<sup>44</sup>See Dos Passos, "Contemporary Chronicles," Carleton Miscellany, 2 (Spring 1961), 25; "What Makes a Novelist," 29.

<sup>45</sup>Dos Passos, "What Makes a Novelist," 31.

<sup>46</sup>The Contemporary Chronicles include the District of Columbia trilogy (1952; Adventures of a Young Man, 1939; Number One, 1943; The Grand Design, 1949), Chosen Country (1951), Most Likely to Succeed (1954), The Great Days (1958), and Mid-century (1961). Three Soldiers and Manhattan Transfer are the two pre-U.S.A. novels customarily included under the same heading.

<sup>47</sup>See, for example, Blessing, pp. 7-8, 19; Erhardt, 36; Žmegač, p. 306 n. 25; Müller-Salget, Alfred Döblin, p. 275.

<sup>48</sup>See Hoffmeister, 301-302; Döblin, "Döblin über Döblin," in Aufsätze, p. 360; "Zukunftspläne," in Die Vertreibung, p. 97; "Die Arbeit am Roman. Diskussionsbemerkungen (1928)," Eckart-Jahrbuch, 1961/62, ed. Kurt Ihlenfeld (Witten: Eckart, 1961), p. 100.

<sup>49</sup>Döblin, "Reform des Romans," Der neue Merkur, 3, No. 3 (June 1919), rpt. in Aufsätze, pp. 32-48.

<sup>50</sup>For brief consideration of a number of points of convergence between Döblin's "epic work" and Brecht's "epic theatre," and their almost certain mutual influence upon each other, see Žmegač, pp. 304-305.

<sup>51</sup>For attention to the absence of certain common denominators among Döblin's "models" and the presence in their work of features that stand in sharp opposition to some of the technical innovations he proposed, see Blessing, p. 18.



<sup>52</sup>Döblin, "Über Roman und Prosa," 215.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, Döblin, "Vom alten zum neuen Naturalismus," in Aufsätze, pp. 138-144; "Literatur und Rundfunk."

<sup>54</sup>Dos Passos, "Towards a Revolutionary Theatre," 20; Döblin, "Mehrfaches Kopfschütteln," 6.

<sup>55</sup>Dos Passos, "Off the Shoals," 99.

<sup>56</sup>Döblin, "Die Arbeit am Roman," p. 100.

<sup>57</sup>Dos Passos, "A Lost Generation," rev. of The Sun Also Rises, by Ernest Hemingway, New Masses, 2, No. 3 (Dec. 1926), 26.

<sup>58</sup>Dos Passos, "Baroja Muzzled," 200.

<sup>59</sup>Döblin, "Starke Schauspieler, dünne Stücke," 3.

<sup>60</sup>See pp. 48-50 above.

<sup>61</sup>Lowry, "The Lively Art of Manhattan Transfer," 1629; Dos Passos, "The World We Live in," rev. of The World of Plenty, by Robert Cantwell, New Republic, 79, No. 1015 (16 May 1934), 25.

<sup>62</sup>Dos Passos, "Homer of the Transsiberian," 202; "Satire as a Way of Seeing," p. 12 and pp. 157-158 above; "Mr. Dos Passos on 'Him'," New York Times, 22 April 1927, Section 9, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup>Döblin, "Welche stilistische Phrase hassen Sie am meisten?," Die literarische Welt, 2, No. 21/22 (21 May 1926), 8.

<sup>64</sup>Döblin, "Feierliche Abdankung der Literatur. Beitrag zur Rundfrage: Dichtung der 'Tatsachen'?", Berliner Tageblatt, 57, No. 519 (2 Nov. 1928), Morning Edition, Supplement 1; "Gespräche mit Kalypso über die Musik. Drittes Gespräch: Auf purpurnen Decken/Von der Frage der Musik," Der Sturm, 1, No. 7 (14 April 1910), 51.

<sup>65</sup>For brief consideration of Döblin's Epos as totale Dichtung within the context of a German twentieth-century development, most of whose participants had a rather different orientation from that of Döblin, see Ribbat, Die Wahrheit, pp. 102-103.

<sup>66</sup>See Döblin, "Die abscheuliche Relativitätslehre," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 543 (24 Nov. 1923), 3; "Naturkenntnis, nicht Naturwissenschaft," Berliner Tageblatt, 52, No. 575 (13 Dec. 1923), 2.

<sup>67</sup>Dos Passos, "What Makes a Novelist," 32.







## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>For consideration of his first two novelistic efforts within the context of Döblin's early work and development, see, for example, Kort, Alfred Döblin, pp. 23-26; Links, pp. 14-21; Ribbat, pp. 8-87; Weyembergh-Broussart, Alfred Döblin, pp. 23-29.

<sup>2</sup>See Dos Passos, Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 85-332, especially pp. 177-178 and 259; Ludington, ed., "One Man's Initiation: 1917-1918," in Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 80; Donnell, I, 165; Landsberg, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>For discussion of Dos Passos' undergraduate prose and poetry, see Donnell, I, 52-63; Landsberg, pp. 24-31. Evidence of Dos Passos' exploration of contemporary life in "Jerichd" can be found in Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 177-178, 209-211. The relationship between Three Soldiers and Manhattan Transfer receives more detailed treatment in W. K. Holditch, "Literary Technique in the Novels of John Dos Passos," Diss. Mississippi 1961, pp. 48, 54-83.

<sup>4</sup>See Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 411.

<sup>5</sup>Compare, for example, the June 20, 1917 diary entries about Dos Passos' New York departure for ambulance corps service in Fourteenth Chronicle (pp. 85-86) and their fictional development in One Man's Initiation (pp. 44, 46). See also the episodic encounter of American ambulance drivers with French whores as it first appears in the straightforward narrative exposition and dialogue of One Man's Initiation (pp. 96-101) and then subsequently re-emerges in one compressed paragraph through the "Camera Eye" in 1919 (p. 86). The raided interpretive dance performance in Manhattan Transfer (pp. 341-343) and its "Camera Eye" version in 1919 (pp. 113-114) offer additional examples of Dos Passos' procedures.

<sup>6</sup>See Landsberg, pp. 108, 243 nn. 37, 38, 39, who also suggests 1916 as the earliest date of origin for the project; Dos Passos, "Production Note: The Garbage Man," in Three Plays, p. 75. Regarding the compatibility of Dos Passos' and Lawson's theatrical interests, see Landsberg, p. 108; George A. Knox and Herbert M. Stahl, Dos Passos and "The Revolting Playwrights", Essays and Studies in American Language and Literature, 15 (Upsals: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1964), pp. 99-101; "Interview with John Howard Lawson," New York Herald Tribune, 14 March 1926, Section 5, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Regarding the connection between "Von der himmlischen Gnade" and Alexanderplatz, see Klotz, "Agon Stadt. Alfred Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," Die erzählte Stadt, p. 372; Müller-Salget, "Zur Entstehung," pp. 118-119. See also pp. 118-123 above for general commentary on Döblin's early Berlin portraits.

<sup>8</sup>Dos Passos, A Pushcart at the Curb (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922), pp. 189-193.



<sup>9</sup>The different versions receive attention from Charles T. Ludington, "An Individual's Focus on Existence: The Novels of John Dos Passos," Diss. Duke 1968, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>In particular, a connection is suggested with a chapter opening insert of a Lower East Side soapbox harangue, Martin Schiff's early discourse on capitalism, and some of the Anna Cohen sections in Manhattan Transfer (pp. 255, 263-264, 330-331, 357-358, 397-398) and the Ben Compton sequence in 1919 (U.S.A., pp. 376-394).

<sup>11</sup>Dos Passos to Arthur McComb, Spring 1923, quoted in Landsberg, p. 98. For Dos Passos' New York residence and reactions, see pp. 115-116 above and also Dos Passos, Fourteenth Chronicle, pp. 73-75, 299-308; Landsberg, pp. 51-52.

<sup>12</sup>Ludington, "The Great Days: 1922-1927," Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 337.

<sup>13</sup>See Waldo Frank, City Block (1922; rpt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 165. On Dos Passos' early acquaintance with Frank and his social criticism, see Landsberg, pp. 45-46, 84, 122, 247 n. 63. Dos Passos' recollection of City Block as well as a tentative suggestion of influence (unsubstantiated by any textual evidence) is offered by Donnell, II, 835 n. 29.

<sup>14</sup>For discussion of such multiple suggested and acknowledged sources as Whitman, Crane, Dreiser, Sandburg, Cummings, Eliot, Flaubert, Zola, Verhaeren, Romaine, Candrar, Baroja, Futurism, and Abstract Expressionism, see, for example, Charles Wilhelm Bernardin, "The Development of John Dos Passos," Diss. Wisconsin 1949, pp. 221-222; Donnell, I, 130, 187-188, and II, 763, 848-852 n. 10; Lowry, "The Lively Art," 1621; Ben Stoltzfus, "Dos Passos and the French," in Belkind, pp. 198-199; George Knox, "Dos Passos and Painting," in Belkind, p. 257; Landsberg, pp. 33, 63, 67, 90-91, 113, 117, 243-244 nn. 45 and 46.

<sup>15</sup>Among these, Futurism in literature and painting, the Piscator theatre, film, and Surrealism have attracted some attention from readers of Alexanderplatz. See, for example, Roland Links, Alfred Döblin. Leben und Werk, Schriftsteller der Gegenwart, 16 (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1965), pp. 74-75; Muschg, "Zwei Romane Alfred Döblins," pp. 220-223; Herman Meyer, "Raumgestaltung und Raum-symbolik in moderner Erzählkunst und Malerei," in Wolfdietrich Rasch, ed., Bildende Kunst und Literatur, Beiträge zum Problem ihrer Wechselbeziehungen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klosterman, 1970), pp. 16-18; Ingeborg McCoy, "Realism and Surrealism in the Works of Alfred Döblin: The Aspect of the Demonic," Diss. Texas 1972; Ekkehard Kaemmerling, "Die filmische Schreibweise," in Prangel, Materialien, pp. 185-198. See also Ch. II n. 50 above.





<sup>16</sup>Müller-Salget, "Zur Entstehung von Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Prangel, Materialien, pp. 120, 122; Beyer, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte," 397-406.

<sup>17</sup>Kracauer, From Caligari, p. 185; Walter Ruttmann, Berlin. Die Symphonie einer Grossstadt, available through the Canadian Film Institute (Ottawa), National Film Library.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, Döblin, "Herr Schmidtbonn und Frau Massary," Prager Tagblatt, 47, No. 220 (20 Sept. 1922), 2; "Der Geist," in Aufsätze, pp. 78-79.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, Jacques Aubert, Introduction à l'esthétique de James Joyce, Etudes angalises, 46 (Paris: Didier, 1973); Maurice Beebe, "Joyce and Aquinas: The Theory of Aesthetics," Philological Quarterly, 36 (Jan. 1957), 20-35; Haskell M. Block, "The Critical Theory of James Joyce," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 8 (March 1950), 172-184; S. L. Goldberg, The Classical Temper. A Study of James Joyce's 'Ulysses' (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961); A. D. Hope, "The Esthetic Theory of James Joyce," Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy, 21 (June 1943), 93-114; David E. Jones, "The Essence of Beauty in James Joyce's Aesthetics," James Joyce Quarterly, 10, No. 3 (Spring 1973), 291-311; Hugh Kenner, Dublin's Joyce (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), pp. 135-157; Levin, James Joyce, pp. 28-31; Frederick M. Link, "The Aesthetics of Stephen Dedalus," Papers on Language and Literature, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1966), 140-149; Geddes MacGregor, "Artistic Theory in James Joyce," Life and Letters, 54 (July 1947), 18-27; J. Mitchell Morse, "Augustine's Theodicy and Joyce's Aesthetics," Journal of English Literary History, 24 (March 1957), 30-43; William T. Noon, S.J., Joyce and Aquinas, Yale University Studies in English, 133 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); Robert Scholes, "Joyce and the Epiphany: The Key to the Labyrinth?," Sewanee Review, 72 (Winter 1964), 65-177; William York Tindall, The Literary Symbol, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 239-245, and A Reader's Guide to James Joyce, 4th ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1962), pp. 94-100.

<sup>20</sup>For specific attention to the Joyce-Mallarmé relationship, see Herbert M. McLuhan, "Joyce, Mallarmé, and the Press," Sewanee Review, 62 (Winter 1954), 30-55; David Hayman, Joyce et Mallarmé, 2 vols., Les Cahiers de Lettres Modernes, Collection "Confrontations," No. 2 (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1956).

<sup>21</sup>See Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 391-718; Frank Budgen, James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses, 4th ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960); Straumann, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup>See James Joyce, The Critical Writings, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann, 4th ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 69. My assessment of Joyce's aesthetic orientation generally corresponds with and draws upon its interpretation by Block, "The Critical Theory."





<sup>23</sup>See also Joyce, Letters, II, 173-174; Ellmann, "Preface," Letters, II, xxxix-xl, and James Joyce, pp. 147, 204-205.

<sup>24</sup>For Joyce's own account of the problematic history of Dubliners, see Letters, II, 291-292, 324-325. See also Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 329-349.

<sup>25</sup>See Ellmann, James Joyce for discussion of Joyce's attitude toward the war (p. 394), his Zurich neutrality (p. 410), and his responses to the 1916 Easter Uprising (pp. 411-412).

<sup>26</sup>Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, 7th ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1966), p. 207.

<sup>27</sup>Joyce, quoted in Stanislaus Joyce, My Brother's Keeper, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1958), pp. 103-104.

<sup>28</sup>See, for example, Joyce, Letters, II, 186, 199; Budgen, pp. 180-181.

<sup>29</sup>Dos Passos, "What Makes a Novelist," 30.

<sup>30</sup>McLuhan, "Technique vs. Sensibility," p. 234.

<sup>31</sup>See Dos Passos, "Contemporary Chronicles," 26; Dos Passos to Landsberg (23 Sept. 1957), Landsberg, p. 253 n. 3.

<sup>32</sup>See pp. 51-54 above.

<sup>33</sup>Joyce, quoted from Interview with Jacob Schwartz, 1956 in Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 716.

<sup>34</sup>Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, 5th ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 30; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Ästhetik, ed. Friedrich Bassenge (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955), II, 452; Georg Lukács, Die Theorie des Romans. Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der grossen Epik, 2nd ed., rev. (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1963), pp. 53, 57-58, 79.

<sup>35</sup>For a related assessment with a somewhat different focus on the Biberkopf action as a variation of the "Deutscher Michel" narrative of the German hero, see Robert Minder, "Alfred Döblin," in Deutsche Literatur im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert. Strukturen und Gestalten, ed. Hermann Friedmann and Otto Mann, 4th ed., rev. (Heidelberg: Wolfgang Rothe, 1967), p. 152.

<sup>36</sup>Joyce to Samuel Beckett, quoted in Richard Ellmann, "Ulysses" on the Liffey (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 57.

<sup>37</sup>Samuel Beckett quoted in Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 562; Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 562-563.



<sup>38</sup>Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, pp. 166-167.

<sup>39</sup>Joyce, Ulysses (1961; rpt. New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1966), p. 727.

<sup>40</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, Réflexions sur la question juive, Collection Idées (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 83. For more detailed considerations of the "authenticity" of Bloom's Jewishness, see Joseph Prescott, "Notes of Joyce's Ulysses," Modern Language Quarterly, 13, No. 2 (June 1952), 150-152, 156, 160, and "The Characterization of Leopold Bloom," Literature and Psychology, 9, No. 1 (Winter 1959), 3-4; Erwin R. Steinberg, The Stream of Consciousness and Beyond in 'Ulysses' (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), pp. 209-212.

<sup>41</sup>For attention to Buck Mulligan's successive transformations, see Fritz Senn, "Book of Many Turns," James Joyce Quarterly, 10, No. 1 (Fall 1972), 32-33. Joyce's own commentary on his treatment of the gypsies' dog can be found in Budgen, pp. 53-54.

<sup>42</sup>Senn, "Book of Many Turns," 31. The Swiss Joycean's entire essay (29-46) is particularly valuable for its focus on Ulysses' polytropic character and its specific manifestations.

<sup>43</sup>Lowry, "The Lively Art of Manhattan Transfer," 1629-1630.

<sup>44</sup>Budgen, p. 68.

<sup>45</sup>Budgen, pp. 67-68; Bernard Benstock, "Ulysses without Dublin," James Joyce Quarterly, 10, No. 1 (Fall 1972), 113; Straumann, p. 113. For attention to the specific Dublin background of Ulysses, see, for example, R. M. Adams, Surface and Symbol: The Consistency of James Joyce's 'Ulysses' (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Richard Kain, Dublin in the Age of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, Centers of Civilization Series (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962).

<sup>46</sup>In this connection see Dos Passos, Facing the Chair. Story of the Americanization of Two Foreignborn Workmen (Boston: Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, 1927).

<sup>47</sup>Howe, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup>For varied considerations of specific manifestations of the heightened form-subject matter fusion in each of the three novels, see, for example, Beach, pp. 408-410, 444; Geoffrey Ehrlich, "Der kaleidoskopische Stil von Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht, 26, No. 8 (Dec. 1934), 253; Walcutt, p. 283; Hülse, p. 58; A. Walton Litz, The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegans Wake' (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 44-52.







<sup>49</sup>For the earliest evidence of Joyce's emphatic recognition of style as the expression of subject matter, see his 1903 praise for the narrative and stylistic effects of Marcelle Tinayre's The House of Sin in Joyce, "A French Religious Novel," in Critical Writings, p. 122. His own attention to the change that occurs in Ulysses can be found in Letters, I, 149. In this connection see also A. Walton Litz, "Ithaca," in Clive Hart and David Hayman, eds., James Joyce's "Ulysses". Critical Essays (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 386.

<sup>50</sup>This assessment of a present tense aspect in Ulysses by Levin, p. 87, is equally applicable to Manhattan Transfer and Alexanderplatz.

<sup>51</sup>Montage is applied to the diverse narrative elements in Alexanderplatz by Erich Hülse, "Alfred Döblin. Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Möglichkeiten des modernen deutschen Romans, ed. Rolf Geissler (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1962), pp. 59-60; Lide, pp. 235-244, draws on both painting and film for his "montage of juxtaposition" and "montage of foreign material" in Alexanderplatz; Kaemmerling, pp. 191-196, relies on certain features of montage as developed by Pudovkin and Eisenstein for listing distinctive features of Döblin's cinematic writing style; Astre, I, 168-171, sees parallels for Griffith's cross-cutting and thematic montage in Manhattan Transfer; Lowry, "The Lively Art," 1635-1636, exploits Eisenstein's general interpretation of montage in his discussion of Manhattan Transfer; Levin, p. 88, appears to equate montage in Ulysses with the editing procedures of Western film; posing an eclectic general definition of montage as a series of narrative juxtapositions from different points of view to generate ideas and sensations in the reader and to create comic, ironic, and symbolic relationships, Barrow's doctoral dissertation adapts film structure as a way of simultaneously engaging in synthesis and analysis while reading Ulysses.

<sup>52</sup>The fact that the obsessions with female undergarments were those of Bloom's creator does not, of course, diminish the effects of such transposed fetishes in the text itself. Biographical data can be found in Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 452; Joyce, Letters, II, 271; Selected Letters of James Joyce, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1975), pp. 185, 190.

<sup>53</sup>Ihering, "Döblin's Heimkehr," 280.

<sup>54</sup>For discussion of the production of Fahnen, see C. D. Innes, Erwin Piscator's Political Theatre: The Development of Modern German Drama (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 102, 220.

<sup>55</sup>George Knox, "Dos Passos and Painting," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 6 (1964), rpt. in Belkind, p. 248, goes so far as to suggest that the "jagged rhythms and agitated lines" of Manhattan Transfer's prose as a whole are similar to the effects of Grosz's line drawings. Knox further suggests that such prose may draw some impetus from Dos Passos' early acquaintance with Grosz's



work during World War I (p. 247).

<sup>56</sup>See, for example, Dos Passos' illustrations accompanying Orient Express and Panama, the volume of translations from Cendrars. A few early sketches and two of his watercolor set proposals for the New Playwrights, for whom Dos Passos designed Constructivist sets, are poorly reproduced in The Fourteenth Chronicle. Generally tending toward Expressionism in their use of color and Primitivism in style, Dos Passos' watercolors were exhibited on several occasions in New York and Washington, D.C. galleries. No study has yet examined the relationship between his own painting and his writing.

<sup>57</sup>Some of these considerations must be brought to bear, for example, on Astre's and Lowry's treatment of film's relationship to Manhattan Transfer. Both show some ambiguity in the discussion of what must necessarily be considered analogues of film technique rather than its direct approximations. See Astre, I, 166-172; Lowry, "The Lively Art," 1630-1633.

<sup>58</sup>I have deliberately not resorted here to the "montage" that is often overused in literary discussions. Pronounced differences between Western and Revolutionary Soviet approaches to film exist, and their existence necessitates greater precision in the use of the term. Moreover, distinctions that further refine the Russian terminology--as developed by Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Timoshenko--must also be taken into account when "montage" is employed. In such a cursory treatment of the analogies between film and literature as this must necessarily be, it seems preferable to substitute more precise and simultaneously less technical equivalents for the purpose of avoiding ambiguity.

<sup>59</sup>See Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin," 179; Jürgen Stenzel, "Mit Kleister und Schere. Zur Handschrift von Berlin Alexanderplatz," Text und Kritik, No. 13/14 (June 1966), 41-44; Dos Passos, "Contemporary Chronicles," 27.

<sup>60</sup>See Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 423-426, 473; Budgen, p. 183; Richard M. Kain, ed., "An Interview with Carola Giedion-Welcker and Maria Jolas," James Joyce Quarterly, 11, No. 2 (Winter 1974), 121.

<sup>61</sup>See M. J. C. Hodgart, "Aeolus," in Hart and Hayman, p. 129.

<sup>62</sup>For expansion of these illuminating proposals, see Francis Phelan, "A Source for the Headlines of 'Aeolus'?", James Joyce Quarterly, 9, No. 1 (Fall 1971), 146-151.

<sup>63</sup>See Stuart Gilbert, James Joyce's 'Ulysses'. A Study (1930; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 172-176.

<sup>64</sup>Joyce's schema of Ulysses is reproduced in Gilbert, p. 38, Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, pp. 226-227, and numerous other critical treatments of the novel. A comparison and brief history of the slightly different versions Joyce provided Carlo Linati and Valéry Larbaud can be found in Ellmann, Ulysses on the Liffey, pp. 187-188.





<sup>65</sup>See Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 310, 311-313, 321.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 666.

<sup>67</sup>Fritz Senn, "Nausicaa," in Hart and Hayman, p. 309; Hayman, Mechanics of Meaning, pp. 15-16.

<sup>68</sup>Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, p. 19.

<sup>69</sup>For a history of the affair see Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 439-441, 454-455, 458-461.

<sup>70</sup>Muschg, ed., "Nachwort des Herausgebers," in Alexanderplatz, p. 526.

<sup>71</sup>Regarding Bänkelsang itself and its relationship to Alexanderplatz, see Muschg, "Nachwort," in Alexanderplatz, p. 519; Schöne, p. 297; Hülse, p. 58; Theodore Ziolkowski, Dimensions of the Modern Novel. German Texts and European Contexts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 290. More detailed treatment of the relationship is furnished by Lide, pp. 162-169; Drago Grah, "Bänkelsängerische Elemente in Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," Acta Neophilologica, 5 (1972), 45-59.

<sup>72</sup>Kaemmerling, p. 197, suggests a filmscript as well.

<sup>73</sup>Calendars and mystery plays are added to these folk tradition likenesses by Muschg, "Nachwort," in Alexanderplatz, pp. 519, 526.

<sup>74</sup>Joris Duytschaever, "Eine Hebbelsatire in Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz," Etudes Germaniques, 24, No. 4 (Oct./Dec. 1963), 536-543; Ziolkowski, pp. 128-129.

<sup>75</sup>The Allen Street reference, like all the other street and neighborhood references in Manhattan Transfer, is non-fictitious. For this reason a printers' error suggests itself in the substitution of "Riverton" for the well-known Rivington Street running perpendicular to Delancey on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

<sup>76</sup>See, for example, Goldberg, p. 97; Sultan, pp. 106-107; Leslie Fiedler, "Bloom on Joyce; Or, Jokey for Jacob," Journal of Modern Literature, 1, No. 1 (1970), 24; Morton P. Levitt, "A Hero for Our Time: Leopold Bloom and the Myth of Ulysses," James Joyce Quarterly, 10, No. 1 (Fall 1972), 143; Steinberg, pp. 217-218; Levin, p. 71.

<sup>77</sup>See Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel. Defoe to the Present, rev. ed. (1951; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 315-316; Steinberg, pp. 217-218; Senn, "Book of Many Turns," 29.





<sup>78</sup>William York Tindall, James Joyce: His Way of Interpreting the Modern World (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 102.

<sup>79</sup>For an untraditional approach to the Blooms' intimate life that interprets the abstinence from "complete" sexual intercourse as Booom's non serviam to fertility, see Adaline Glasheen, "Calypso," in Hart and Hayman, pp. 51-60.

<sup>80</sup>See Louis Gillet, Claybook for James Joyce (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1958), p. 111, quoted in Steinberg, p. 227.

<sup>81</sup>The argument used here is developed in detail by Vivienne Koch, "An Approach to the Homeric Content of Joyce's Ulysses," Maryland Quarterly, 1 (1944), 123-125. An interesting complement to Koch, who also considers Stephen's ambivalence toward sonship, is provided by Steinberg's content analysis, pp. 233-236. It demonstrates that Stephen is not looking for a father but for himself.

<sup>82</sup>See, for example, Leon Edel, The Modern Psychological Novel (1955; rpt. New York: Grosser & Dunlop, 1964), p. 177; Levin, pp. 113-135; Beach, Twentieth Century Novel, pp. 404-407.

<sup>83</sup>For a curious "racial" interpretation of Bloom's fatalism, see Budgen, pp. 145-146.

<sup>84</sup>This important aspect of Alexanderplatz and its interpretation of German socio-political realities have received attention from James H. Reid, "Berlin Alexanderplatz. A Political Novel," German Life and Letters, NS 21, No. 3 (April 1968), 214-223.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 219.

<sup>86</sup>For consideration of the more "closed" conclusion of an earlier draft version which had a bright and sharp-eyed, reflective and aware Franz employed as a newsdealer on the Alex, see Becker, pp. 76-78; Kreutzer, pp. 122-123; Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer, "Der Wissende und die Gewalt. Alfred Döblins Theorie des epischen Werkes und der Schluss von Berlin Alexanderplatz," in Prangel, Materialien, p. 153.

<sup>87</sup>See Howe, p. 34.

<sup>88</sup>See Links, pp. 91-92; Hülse, p. 76.

<sup>89</sup>For commentary on the stimulus-response composition of Dos Passos' characters, see Astre, I, 173-174; Joseph Warren Beach, American Fiction: 1920-1940 (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 44. Dos Passos himself applied a "behaviorist" designation to his method of characterization. In his usage, however, "behaviorism" described a method of generating a character's insides by external description. Dos Passos considered it a centuries-old method. See Fourteenth Chronicle, p. 522.



<sup>90</sup>Anders, p. 423.

<sup>91</sup>The single detailed study of Die Ehe to date is furnished by Ernst Ribbat, "Ein Lehrstück ohne Lehre. Alfred Döblins Szenenreihe Die Ehe," Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, 91 No. 4 (Dec. 1972), 540-557. I am largely in agreement here with its particular analysis of the play's problematic aspects and summarize Ribbat's argument in my discussion.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 555-556. Ribbat, 553, also distinguishes between Die Ehe and Brecht's dialectical theatre.

<sup>93</sup>Compare Klotz, pp. 342 et passim and Walcutt, p. 281.

<sup>94</sup>For attention to this feature of Alexanderplatz and a view of the work as a "negative bourgeois novel," see Anders, pp. 425-426.

<sup>95</sup>Opinions that Alexanderplatz ends only with an individual and with neither harmony nor solidarity are expressed, for example, by Ernst Nef, "Die Zufälle der 'Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf'," Wirkendes Wort, 18, No. 4 (July/Aug. 1968), 258; Anders, p. 423; an attempt to explain the dualism in Alexanderplatz and two of Döblin's other novels as the dialectic between religious and socialist-activist views of man is offered by Mark Goldberg, "The Individual and Society in the Novels of Alfred Döblin," Diss. New York 1969.

<sup>96</sup>Joyce to Carlo Linati, 21 September 1920, quoted in Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 535.

<sup>97</sup>For one of the most recent and thorough explorations of the numerous Homeric sources for Ulysses, see Gene Arnold Rister, "The Odyssean Backgrounds of Ulysses. Joyce's Sources and His Development of the Homeric Motif," Diss. Wisconsin 1972.

<sup>98</sup>A concise summary of the main tendencies in Joyce criticism on the subject can be found in Levitt, 133-134.

<sup>99</sup>For the single study dealing in length and detail with the use of biblical material in Alexanderplatz, see Eugene Patrick Finnegan, S.J., "Biblical Themes in the Novels of Alfred Döblin," Diss. Northwestern 1967, pp. 65-137. In Dos Passos scholarship only Georges-Albert Astre's work (I, 151-155 et passim) focuses on the broader implications of biblical symbols and themes. Seeing no symbolic pattern in Manhattan Transfer, Leon Titcher (127-128) mentions only that "Berlin is equated with the 'Hure Babylon' . . . , and Manhattan with Ninevah." McLean (106-107) limits his comparison of past-present analogies in Alexanderplatz and Ulysses to the biblical counterpoint for Franz's situation and the Elijah-Christ characterizations of Bloom.

<sup>100</sup>Kimon Friar, trans., "Introduction," in Nikos Kazantzakis, The Odyssey. A Modern Sequel (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), p. xxvi.







<sup>101</sup>See Budgen, pp. 169-171; Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 397, 420-421.

<sup>102</sup>Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, pp. 181-182.

<sup>103</sup>Detailed consideration of the network of urban symbols can be found in Gelfant, pp. 151-159.

<sup>104</sup>Astre, I, 152-153; E. D. Lowry, "Manhattan Transfer: Dos Passos' Wasteland," The University Review, 30, No. 1 (Oct. 1963), 47-52.

<sup>105</sup>For a somewhat different interpretive view attributing quasi-metaphysical significance to Manhattan Transfer's use of the Old Testament, see Astre, I, 151-155.

<sup>106</sup>Comparison of Alexanderplatz with its English-language translation reveals significant differences in parallel portions of the text. In a number of cases Jolas has incorporated the equivalents from the King James version of the Bible without attempting to modify the verses in any approximation of Döblin's original. Book VI's interpolation from Revelation, for example, (Jolas, p. 322) is pure King James; in the same book, part of Jeremiah 9:10 included in the German (Jolas, p. 370; Döblin, p. 286) is omitted; Book I's quotations in Jolas (p. 18) are Jeremiah (51:9 and 50:35), while Döblin (p. 19) rewords Scripture. More important, the "mit" - "Vor allem Veih" distinction between the novelistic and biblical curses upon the serpent, a differentiation which is likely an index of Döblin's naturism, is neglected entirely by Jolas' unaltered transcription of Genesis 3:14.

<sup>107</sup>For attention to the relationship between Döblin's religiosity and Eastern and Western religious traditions between 1912-25 and 1925-33, see Weyembergh-Broussart, pp. 93-118, 181-212.

## CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup>Such limitations are even more evident in the trilogy which followed Manhattan Transfer. The U.S.A. presented by Dos Passos seems divorced from the inherited tradition given attention as early as 1748. In its reflections on black slavery, Montesquieu's De l'esprit des lois ("Livre quinzième") already perceived that the New World was created by the European extermination of an indigenous population and subsequently dependent on the importation of enslaved black Africans for the purpose of cultivating its land. See Charles Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu, De l'esprit des lois, ed. J. Ehrard, Les Classiques du Peuple (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1969), p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Saul Bellow, Lecture at Franklin and Marshall College, quoted in Levitt, 143.

<sup>3</sup>Levitt, 141.



<sup>4</sup>Joyce to Ezra Pound, quoted in Kenner, Dublin's Joyce, p. 167.

<sup>5</sup>Guillermo Cabrera Infante, "Guillermo Cabrera Infante, London (October 5-12, 1970)," in Rita Guibert, ed., Seven Voices: Seven Latin American Writers Talk to Rita Guibert, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 415.

<sup>6</sup>Eliot, 473.



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